Into the marginal zone

E. Galen

An Autoethnographic Journey through Teaching Experience

Vigdis Stokker Jensen

Master Thesis in Philosophy of Education
Spring 2009
University of Bergen
Norway
Faculty of Psychology

Abstract

This autoethnographic study explores how potentials of learning and new hope emerge in decisive events where a teacher and marginalized students in Norwegian upper secondary school are involved. The events are based on my own teaching experience, and are brought into the study as four narratives. These narratives are analyzed by means of the concept of chronotope (timespace) developed by the Russian philosopher M. M. Bakhtin. His philosophy of time, space, the act and dialogicality provides the theoretical backdrop of the study, and has been used to discuss the findings. The Norwegian Government's white paper on education and social equalisation provides an educational context, and is discussed with the findings and the theoretical perspective.

The aim of the study has been to investigate what knowledge of importance for the way we approach marginalized students that can be drawn from the narrated events and the methods used to analyze them. The philosophical question of what it means to be human in educational settings and context is not part of the aims of the study, but is a perspective on which the study rests.

The findings of this study are the identification of four new chronotopes, where the chronotope of relation could be said to be the more important among the four. The study promotes the relation as basic for creating change in challenging educational situations, and in particular for changing the life story of marginalized students. More importantly, the knowledge of how to initiate, develop and maintain a relationship is found to be of such crucial importance for the students to manage well in society that it has to be a main educational aim together with basic skills and other types of knowledge. The study sums up with the development of a concept of *chronotopical thinking,* which is an embodied and relational way of thinking.

The study points to further perspectives for education and educational research as a consequence of the findings. Chronotopical thinking could be a new and fruitful approach in teaching and learning. The concept also calls for further research, with regards to its difference to cognitive and analytical forms of rationality. The study sums up with a challenge for policymakers to acknowledge the view that humans are relational, and make this a reality in further policy planning.

Abstract in Norwegian

Denne autoetnografiske studien utforsker hvordan potensial for læring og nytt håp kan oppstå i avgjørende hendelser der en lærer og marginaliserte elever i norsk videregående skole er involvert. Hendelsene er basert på min egen lærererfaring, og bringes inn i denne studien som fire fortellinger. Disse fortellingene er analysert ved hjelp av kronotop-begrepet som ble utviklet av den russiske filosofen M. M. Bakhtin. Hans filosofi om tid, rom, handling og dialogisitet utgjør studiens teoretiske bakteppe, og har blitt brukt i diskusjonen av studiens funn. Den norske regjerings "white paper" om utdanning og sosial utjevning har blitt brakt inn i studien som en utdanningskontekst, og den blir diskutert sammen med funnene og det teoretiske perspektivet.

Målene med studien har vært å undersøke ha slags kunnskap som er viktig for måten vi forholder oss til marginaliserte elever på. Denne kunnskapen har blitt hentet ut av fortellingene gjennom analysen av dem. Et annet perspektiv, som likevel ikke utgjør noe mål for studien, men heller danner basis for tenkningen i den, er det filosofiske spørsmålet om hva det vil si å være menneske i utdanningssituasjoner og deres kontekst.

Funnene i studien er identifikasjonen av fire nye kronotoper, der relasjonskronotopen kan sies å være den viktigste. Studien fremholder relasjon som et grunnlag for endring i utfordrende situasjoner, og spesielt med tanke på endring i marginaliserte elevers livsfortellinger. Men et viktigere poeng er at kunnskapen om hvordan en kan innlede, bevare og utvikle en god relasjon er så avgjørende viktig for hvordan marginaliserte elever skal klare seg videre i samfunnet, at den ikke kan sees atskilt fra andre utdanningsmål. Studien oppsummeres ved utviklingen av et nytt begrep; kronotopisk tenkning, som er en kroppsliggjort og relasjonell tenkemåte.

Studien peker mot videre perspektiver for utdannning og utdanningsforskning som en konsekvens av disse funnene. Kronotopisk tenkning kan være en ny og fruktbar tilnærming til undervisning og læring. Begrepet påkaller vider forskning, spesielt med tanke på å utforske forskjellene mellom kronotopisk tenkning og kognitiv, analytisk rasjonalitet. Studien oppsummeres med en utfordring til policymakers, om å anerkjenne synet på mennesket som relasjonelt, og ta dette med i videre utdanningsplanlegging.

Acknowledgements

This text is in many ways a narrative visualization of a journey from teaching to research. This new life story is not at all made from purely individual effort. I want to thank those who participated in making this new story, and in various ways helped me make this text what it is:

First of all, my main tutor Herdis Alvsvåg: thank you for keeping your door open, for stimulating and enriching conversations, for your open mind, for being a good, critical and constructive reader, and for having faith in me and my project.

Next, my second tutor, Arne Vines: thank you for having faith in me and my project from the very beginning, for seeing things in my text I myself did not see and for your never-ending enthusiasm and involvement.

Philosopher Steinar Bøyum: thank you for being an excellent and very helpful reader of my text.

My fellow master students: thank you for a wonderful, vibrating, warm, supportive, humorous and engaging two year long journey in the philosophy of education.

To Beate, my fellow student and friend: my life story would not have been the same without you.

To my wonderful, intelligent and supportive sons:
Thank you both for enriching my life. André - thank you in particular for long, stimulating and eye-opening conversations about research methods, and for the laptop. Joachim - thank you in particular for all hours spent on language corrections.

Ida Sofie, my dear friend, thank you for following up on me daily with warm, intelligent, and humorous support and inspiration.

Els, my dear friend, thank you for supportive and stimulating conversations. Thank you in particular, Els, for the front page.

Inger Randi, thank you for being a co-traveller with me these two years, with never-ending compassion and enthusiasm.

To all my other friends: thank you for your patience and support.

Last, but not least, even though he cannot read it: thank you, Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, for sharing your thoughts.

Illustration on front page: "Julia" - a painting by Els Geelen. Photo edited by the artist. Original: oil on linen, 45x45cm, 2008. www.elsgeelen.com

"If it be Your will that that there is a voice…" (Leonard Cohen)

Table of content

Introduction

In its starting point, this study is an anthropological text. The text has been built upon certain events that took place in the every day life in upper secondary school in Norway. These events involve me, the teacher, and some marginalized students at the age of approximately sixteen. The fact that the events are part of my own previous experience as an educator, make this text more precisely an autoethnographic study. Autoethnography is the study of the self in a cultural setting. In this study, the cultural setting is constructed from the school life in vocational training and general studies. A further context is constructed from a reading of The Norwegian Government's white paper on education and social equalization (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2007).

There is not one, single, precise definition of what the autoethnographic method is or how it should be performed or put into a research account. The basic line in this type of research, though, is that the researcher herself has to invent, construct, and create, her own way of performing and writing the experience into the text. The experience is analyzed as text. This is what I have done, as will be evident from what follows.

In this study the ethnographic material is narrative in form. I have chosen four events out of a large amount of possible events to describe narratively. The students involved are at the verge of falling out of the school system, they are *marginalized* by the system, so to speak. This is why I think of them as being in a *marginal zone*, which the teacher needs to enter if she wants to be able to reach them.

There is in addition a philosophical perspective in this text. A certain educational praxis is studied in relation to policy, to see if this can shed light on the issue of educational aims and what it means to be human in particular educational situations and contexts.

Chronotopic analysis

From a meta-perspective one could consider the whole text a narrative construction; a performance of my development from being a teacher practitioner into becoming a researcher. However, this meta-perspective of my own professional development is not the center of

investigation in this text. But my reflections on this development; and the fact that there has been a long time (at least ten years) since the first events described in the narratives took place, made me wonder about the phenomenons of time and place. The words 'then and now' and 'here and there' lingered in my mind, and I decided to make them one of the main parts of the study as leading themes, as it were. In 1937-1938 M. M. Bakhtin (2006a) developed the concept of *chronotope,* which literally means *timespace,* as a device or tool by which he analyzed narrative texts from the Greek Antique to the realistic novels of Dostoevsky. The concept of chronotope is what I use as an analytic tool in this study, because, as Bakhtin writes: "The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied" (2006, p. 250).

But Bakhtin had also been concerned with the phenomenons of time and space earlier in his career. Around 1919-1920 he wrote a text called "Toward a Philosophy of the Act" (1999), in which he discusses Kant's philosophy on time and space as it is put forward in "Critique of Pure Reason." Bakhtin is developing a rather different view on time and space in human perception, and human action connected to ethical evaluations, than that of Kant's. Bakhtin's philosophy, on the background of this discussion, creates the theoretical perspective in this study. Bakhtin called his method "philosophical anthropology" (Clark & Holquist, 1984, p. 3; Sidorkin, 1999, p. 9). This could apply to my method as well, perhaps with a literary twist to my study.

Textual layers

As the perceptive reader will notice, this is a text with several layers. None of the layers should be placed in hierarchical positions above the others, but rather work as different perspectives or voices, to paint a fuller picture of what is at stake in the text. Nevertheless, many layers and several methodological viewpoints do not work frictionlessly together in one study. In narrative inquiry, it could be important to be aware of "rubbing points with other works, values, methodologies in the field" (Clandinin, Connelly, & Chan, 2002, p. 137). This perspective is underscored in this study on several places, and in particular in the layers of analysis. Thus the rubbing points shed light on the tensions within the text, but also the tensions between this study and other ways of doing educational research.

The first textual layer is the narrative accounts of the experienced events. But there is no documentation whatsoever that these events have taken place, or that the narratives give an accurate account of the events. Thus, these narratives have their own lives and their own textual realities, and do not word by word represent lived experience as such. This argument does not say, however, that there are no links between the narratives and the world outside them. The narratives express something about being a teacher and a student in challenging situations which has been of great importance to me as an educator. The recognition of the situations, and the thoughts and emotions in the reader participates in linking the narratives to realities outside the text. But in this particular study the narratives are my first attempt to interpret what happened. This first textual layer is what will be analyzed, not the events in real life.

The second layer within the text is the first chronotopic analyses of the narratives, in the chapter titled First analysis. The third layer, which is titled Second analysis, is a further identification and abstraction of the findings. The fourth layer is the chapter on Discussion. In this chapter the findings are discussed and seen in light of Bakhtin's philosophy. The Norwegian Government's white paper (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2007) is also brought into this discussion. The main points of the white paper are outlined further below.

A journey through teaching experience

It is important to notice that the metaphor of a *journey,* as mentioned in the title of this study, is not referred to as an aimless stroll. The metaphor is used to give some associations; like walking or traveling in a particular landscape, probably to get some experience on the way, see new sites, meet and talk to unfamiliar people, see old experiences and stories in a new light. In this study the journey is guided by the phenomenons of time and space, which will open up the landscape of educational situations, always pointing towards the aim of the journey, while taking the context into account all the way. This interpretation of the metaphor reveals the heart of autoethnography, which places the self in a cultural context. As Reed-Danahay writes: "duality of self-reference and cultural reference […] is integral to the notion of autoethnography" (1997, p. 9). The "guides" of time and space points to the theoretical perspective of this study.

An important question to ask is what the "journey" metaphor brings to the text. First of all, it invites the reader to be a co-traveler. As the author of the text, I am present, not as the physical I, but as the textually constructed "I." But the text will not fulfill its potential without the reader, the co-traveler, as an active, meaning-making partner. In Bakhtinian words; the text is filled with meaning as I write it. But this meaning is within me, in my consciousness. When the text leaves my hand, it becomes an empty potential. The reader needs to create meaning from his/her own situation, from an active consciousness, to make the text an actuality, rather than a potential. Thus, I welcome the reader to take part in this journey, and join the conversation over the topics I bring to the text.

Aims of the study

In light of the chosen theoretical approach, the aim is to discover how time and space; the chronotope, can release the potentials of meaning in the narratives. To be more specific; I am looking for what knowledge of importance for the way we approach marginalized students that can be drawn from the narrated events and the methods used to analyze them. A prolongation of this aim is to investigate what consequences this knowledge could have for our perspectives on educational aims.

Research questions

The research question of this study is:

Narratives from Upper Secondary School:
How do potentials for learning and new hope emerge in decisive events where the teacher and marginalized students are involved?

As the work with this study progressed, I found that one additional question was appropriate:

How can this study open up for a wider perspective on educational aims?

Why use the words *event* and *decisive* in the first research question? The word *event* is chosen because of what it is in particular that has triggered my attention in my own experience as an educator. I am not, in this study, after the didactics, methods, teaching styles, or classroom discussions. Nor am I focused on teacher-student relations or teacher-student dialogue per se. I have chosen to write and analyze these narratives because they reveal important changes in the students' view of themselves and their chances to learn and grow within the school system. What I want to investigate is what is happening in the moment the situation for the teacher and the marginalized students transforms from hopelessness to hope. This transformation is embedded in some almost unnoticeable events that take place in the narratives, which alters the learning process and the aims of learning dramatically for both teacher and students. What happens in the blink of an eye when nobody seems to pay attention, but when the atmosphere suddenly shifts, and the persons involved view each other from an apparently alien perspective? Without bringing a perspective of cause and effect into the study; I will argue that the acts within these events have unforeseen and rather dramatic consequences. Thus; the events are *decisive.*

In addition to this aforementioned meaning of the word *event*, it has a particular meaning in Bakhtin's philosophy. Bakhtin uses the expression "once-occurrent event of Being" when he discusses the way he perceives human life. The life of the individual is unique, nothing in it is repeatable, and there is *no alibi* to hide behind. According to Bakhtin (1999), this uniqueness is at first a passive or empty *possibility,* only to be transformed into *actuality* when the individual answer this possibility with an *act.* In other words; when I am "unindifferent toward the once-occurrent whole" (p. 42), I am answering the call of the possibility in a responsible way. The word *event* thus refers to the individual, irreplaceable life; and to the actual act within this life.

This double meaning of the word event thus corresponds to the two perspectives in this study. The particular event that takes place in the educational setting, which only can happen if there is an act that initiates it, is one perspective. The other is the deep underlying philosophical question throughout this text that asks what it means to be a human being, and how the individual act reflects the answer to that question in the particular educational settings lined out in the narratives.

The educational events are always situated in a specific educational policy context. In the next chapter I will draw the main lines of the Norwegian Government's white paper, which will be used in this study to contextualize the narrated events.

The Norwegian Government's white paper on education and social equalisation

The Norwegian Government's white paper[1] on education and social equalisation[2] (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2007), has been chosen for this study because of its novelty and thematic content. It originated from the fact that Norwegian schools have low scores within the areas of reading, writing, arithmetic and ICT[3] according to different OECD surveys (PIRLS 2001, PISA/TIMMS/ALL 2003). The paper clearly states the Government's view on the aims of education, and what measures should be taken to reach those aims.

The Government gives itself the task of reducing differences in society through the educational system. The goals are to "diminish class distinctions, reduce economic inequity and combat poverty and other forms of marginalisation" (p.1). In order to reach these goals, the Government wants the education system to intensify the "combat" against the different forms of marginalization, to "make a greater contribution to social equalisation" (ibid).

The white paper states that comparative to several other countries, Norway has been less successful in the achievement of social equalization (based on PISA 2000, p. 15-16). Literacy and numeracy skills are considered essential for enabling people to participate in society. In addition, they are considered key factors for decreasing the high number of drop-outs in upper secondary school and as a consequence also prevent early disability pension. The socio-economic benefits are therefore vast, as the document strongly underscores, in addition to the improvement for the individual's possibility of self-realization.

It is interesting to learn that the Government considers knowledge and basic skills a tool for reducing inequity in society, and at the same time wants the educational system to be the

---

[1] White Paper: A Government report giving information or proposals on an issue (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1990)
[2] My study is written in American, while the white paper use English language. In the white paper's title and in quotations, the language of the paper is maintained. Otherwise I use American language.
[3] Digital literacy

arena where inequity and marginalization is transformed to equality. The educational system is therefore both the tool for later equalization *and* the place where equalization shall be attained

In the structure of society, inequality is visualized in class distinctions, economic injustice and poverty, problems for the individual in following up on and keeping a job, and failure to participate in democratic processes. The measure to change this is, according to the white paper, the amelioration of the individual's education. In the structure of education, the inequality emerges first of all when grades are given in lower secondary school. The second step in the visualization of the effects of family background is the choice of programme in upper secondary school. Children from backgrounds with low education and income, tend to choose vocational training. The recruitment to technical and vocational training is thus "socially lopsided" (p.12). These children often leave lower secondary education with poor grades. The background of low education and income, together with poor grades, seem to be the most significant factors for the risk that the student drops out of vocational training. This is the third step of visualization of inequality within the educational system.

What is seen as the main factor behind social inequality as well as unwanted differences within the educational system is therefore the family background. Parents with low education will not be able to support and follow up on their children's educational progress or their development into participative adults in society and work. These family backgrounds cause knowledge- and skill-gaps within education, and the Government has as its main aim to reduce these gaps. But the family background cannot be changed. This is why the Government claims responsibility, and states that "[w]hen a large number of people are prevented by poor learning development in childhood and adolescence from participating in the knowledge society, the system is to blame" (p. 3). If the educational system does not succeed in mending the gap of knowledge and skills, there will be an endless spiral of reproduction of differences.

The measures to promote social equalization by means of the educational system, is to better the completion rate in upper secondary school. However, there are few goals found in this white paper that target this educational level. Instead, the white paper introduces the concept of "early intervention."

Early intervention is a key to the ability within the education system to meet the needs of the individual in what is called a favourable way. The concept of early intervention contains "action at an early stage of a child's life," and "intervention when problems arise or are revealed at pre-school age, during basic education or in adulthood" (p. 3). What should be revealed at an early age is what promotes or hinders learning: good or late language development. This is based on the view that "language development is crucial to a child's further development – intellectually, socially and emotionally" (p. 5). Good language development creates the foundation for knowledge and basic skills, which have to be "built up block by block" (p. 4).

The white paper provides a context to my study, because it addresses the dangers of marginalization in school and society, and the problem of increasing numbers of drop-outs from upper secondary school. In addition, it contributes to the actualization of my study for the same reasons, but also because the paper raises the need for more research on teaching and learning. My study is, though, not an answer to the question of "what works." Instead, it provides an alternative perspective on educational aims and a different view on how to meet the needs of marginalized students.

This last part of the introduction section has given an outline of the main topics in the Norwegian Government's white paper on social equalisation. It is brought into this study to provide a context, a backdrop, an element in the discussion of the main findings of the study, and an actualization of the research problem I address in this study. In addition to this policy document, the next chapter will provide another type of actualization. A review of relevant research on autoethnography and chronotopic studies in educational research will contribute in creating another piece of the backdrop of the study, as well as giving relevance to my methodological, theoretical and topical point of view.

Voices from the research field

Within the research field of education, there seems to be just a small amount of studies that touch the key concepts of this text. On the other hand, for a topic like "narrative study in education" the field is huge, and nearly impossible to make a review of. It would have to be narrowed down by using other keywords in addition. In this chapter the titles will indicate what I have been looking for[4]. I comment on the studies' relevance to my research in between; and give a summative conclusion at the end of the whole chapter. The aims of this review are twofold. First, I intend to link my research to other studies to see similarities, but also to find the differences that serve as actualizations for my study. A second aim is to introduce the reader to the landscape of autoethnography and chronotopic studies.

Autoethnographic teacher narratives

Within the Nordic countries, autoethnographic studies are rare. I have not been able to track down one single study within the field of education. Outside these countries I have found some, which I give a brief review of here.

In a Canadian study, Catherine McGregor (2007) explores her way from dreaming of becoming a teacher as a little girl, into practicing as a teacher in primary school, until she starts her PhD-studies and finally is offered a job as an educator of educators. Her personal memoirs, formed into small narratives, function as the basis of her study. The aim of the study is to investigate the fashioning of a teacher identity, and use the research text as a space for reflective activity, to aid the reshaping of this identity. Even though a lot of markers of time and space are mentioned all over the text and also discussed several times, there is no theoretical investigation connected to this aspect. McGregor keeps her study in the personal reflective tone all the way, making this more an autobiographical study than autoethnographic research. However, the borders between these two methodological genres are blurred, which is probably one of the reasons why an autoethnographic text often has biographical traits, and vice versa. My study differs from McGregor's in several ways. The introspective aspect of transition is not a focal point in my study, and I investigate my narratives in a particular educational policy context, which is not mentioned in McGregor's study.

---

[4] Search has been done in Education – JSTOR, Philosophy – JSTOR, ERIC (OCLC), NORART, ScienceDirect.

In a study from Belfast, Northern Ireland, Louise Long (2008) is investigating through her own story how to bridge the gap between the academic and spiritual aspect of being a teacher. This study is enhanced by the governmental policy of value-based curricula, and in the study Long discusses a more holistic approach to teaching and schooling than what has been the traditional line. Long gives an evocative story of illness and rehabilitation from a tumor attack. This experience taught her the spiritual values of forgiveness, acceptance and renewal.

What is methodologically very interesting in Long's study, related to mine, is her thorough discussion on the autoethnographic method as a tool for educational research. She mentions the problems of self-indulgence and narcissism that are often discussed around this method. Crucial for avoiding these problems is explaining the aims of the study, she argues. Long also places the ethical questions in the centre of the study. In particular she discusses what she calls the biggest battle: "how much to reveal and what lines to cross" (p. 193). The problem of evaluating autoethnographic studies is also part of Long's study.

These methodological discussions are also a large part of the chapter on method in my own study. It is crucial for all qualitative methods to have some of these discussions, and in particular it is important for an explorative and not-so-well-known method like autoethnography. But instead of spending energy on avoiding the big fallacies of the method, I would like to bring two other questions into the foreground of my own study: What knowledge can this particular method bring to the field of educational research, and why have I favored this method at the expense of other approaches? The answers to these questions are closely connected to the aims of my research, and to how the study can be validated. The chapter on method will bring up the main part of this discussion, but it will also be addressed in the final chapters of analysis and discussion.

In her study of bilingual discourses in American Public Schools, Mariana Souto-Manning (2006) draws on her experience as a Latino teacher and mother. Her study shows the emotions of rage in her meeting with a veteran educator; and the frustrations over the American Public School Policy; both promote bilingualism in children as a deficit in stead of a resource. What is particularly interesting in this study, related to my own research, is that Souto-Manning uses autoethnographic method combined with critical discourse analysis and conversational narrative analysis, in order to keep both a macro-and a micro-perspective in her analyses of

her material. With this perspective, she manages to keep the study personal, but at the same time brings it into a political discourse. This is a move related to mine.

Scott -William Gust (2007) explores the experience of "coming out" as a homosexual teacher in class. His teaching experience revealed in this study is a period of six years, in which he has taught over one thousand students. His project as a teacher, and in this study, is to critically investigate both his own practice, the material he brings into the study, and the local and global political attitudes and practices toward homosexual men. He studies his personal process of discovering that he had always been homosexual, the advices he got from other homosexual teachers before he came out, and particularly his own students' responses on his openness. Gust approaches his well-written story with the critical pedagogy of Freire. His study is courageously open and personal, while at the same time deeply critical and political.

As a preliminary conclusion I can say that all these four studies shed light upon the plurality of approaches to and ways of performing this method. What they all seem to have in common, is that they are not only personal, but mainly focus on their personal development or growth as teachers. In this sense they all differ from my study. This difference relates to the distinction that Polkinghorne (1988) draws, between two types of narrative investigation: Narrative analysis and analysis of narrative. The studies in this review conduct analyses of their personal developments as educators in a narrative way, while I conduct analyses of events that are formed into narratives. Gust and Souto-Manning are those who more explicitly focus on a political aspect in addition to the personal, and use their studies as tools for (political) change.

Had I opened up my search for texts to review using other keywords, like personal narrative, autobiography, or teacher history, the list would have been endless. Ever since the late sixties, the narrative and personal way of doing research, particularly within anthropology, has exploded. I would like to bring a review into this reading of relevant research, which critically discusses the genres of autoethnography and critical personal narrative.

Burdell and Swadener (1999) find that researches of these types usually are a mixture of poststructuralistic form and a content from critical theory. Very often "[t]hey embody a critique of the prevailing structures and relationships of power and inequity in a relational context" (p. 21). Implicitly or explicitly they are often based on materialist thinking and

discursive structures, and evidently are political messages or statements. Scientifically they represent a movement away from highly theoretical writing, which is seen as distancing from those the studies are meant to represent, study, or give voice to. Burdell and Swadener claim that an important question to ask about such research methods is whose interests they actually serve. Embedded in this question lies complex questions of power, and these genres should be used with "some deliberate caution, questioning its limits, and realizing its tendency toward possessive individualism or even narcissism" (p. 25). When this is taken into account, the authors of this review argue that "the personal can evoke the political over time" (ibid).

As a response to the article's argument that autoethnography is a movement away from highly theoretical scientific writing, I would argue that I move in a somewhat opposite direction. I try to combine the personal narrative with highly theoretical writing. In my study, I believe that this approach creates opportunities to explore the structures and the ruptures in the personal narratives. In these ruptures and structures it is possible to identify and explore the potentials of change.

It is the concept of chronotope from Bakhtin's thinking that is the theoretical base and the main tool for investigating the narratives. In the following part of this review chapter, I will discuss some chronotopic studies with relevance to my research.

Chronotopic studies

The body of chronotopic research is large, particularly within the research field of literature and literary analysis. In education, they are very rare, apart from studies in pedagogy. The field of chronotopic pedagogical studies is dominated by chronotope as a tool for analyzing texts in class situations, but there are a few that have other foci. In this review, I bring in four different studies, to show the variety in the field, and how my study relates to them.

Brown & Renshaw (2006) use the chronotope to analyze how students actively shape their surroundings in the classroom, and how their experience, involvement and goals interact with this shaping of space to create a dynamic time-space process. They particularly mention one girl, who created a space of her own in the classroom, by means of bookshelves. This way, she could keep the distance she needed to work in ways that supported her learning process in a suitable way. The design and practical organization of the classroom, together with

individual learning processes, are what constitutes the shifting chronotopes in this study. The chronotope is thus a device used directly to investigate classroom practice, and not as a tool for textual analysis. Thus, this is the main difference from my study.

Scott Crossley (2007) focuses on chronotope as a defining device for genres, to investigate if the rhetoric unity within a genre also could be defined by chronotopes. If it could be used this way, chronotope would be both a device for analyses of specific genres, and an instructional tool in teaching such genres. Crossley's aim is to find tools to understand the underlying structures of texts of specific genres, to enable students to become more familiar with and proficient in their construction of texts. With such skills, they will be able to make creative choices within the genre limits, and participate with confidence in the discourses they choose. Crossley's study is clearly very different from mine.

Nelson, Hull and Roche-Smith (2008) have made a study based on a twelve year old boy who decided to make a digital presentation of his life story, to tell how he had become the person he was. The authors follow his process during the making of the presentation, and interview him again five years later. They critically investigate his adult "helpers'" influence on the boy's self-presentation, as well as how he interpreted both the process and the effect this presentation had on his life. The forces of "fixity" and "fluidity" operate in different meaning-making ways in this story. "Fixity" conceptualizes the different multi-modal chronotopes at play, and contributes in the boy's semiotically fixed identity at different stages. "Fluidity" is the different interpretations of this multi-media product he created, and the influence they can have in his life world. The authors rely on Bakhtin's notion that the chronotope "plays a defining role in shaping cultural identities and the ways people come to think about themselves and each other" (p. 419).

This study is related to mine, in the way that the authors investigate narrated material by means of the chronotope. It differs from mine in the way that they focus on identity, while mine is centered on acts that turn out to be decisive in particular situations. The acts the teacher and the students perform have influence on their identities, in particular on the change in perception of their own Self. But my study focuses on the act, not the forming of a whole identity.

Summary

This review differs from the regular, more summative way of performing an investigation of relevant research. In accordance with the aims of this review, this way of doing it will have given an introduction to the multiplicity of autoethnographic and chronotopic approaches to research topics.

Regarding the autoethnographic method, my study follows a well known narrative path. This will be further discussed in the chapter on method. But my study differs from the examples in this review, in that I do not focus on my own development or transitional periods in my life as an educator. Within the field of educational autoethnographic studies, there clearly is a need for more and different approaches.

As for chronotopic studies, they all differ very much from my study. All of them, apart from the direct classroom study, use the chronotope as a narrative device. So do I. But I link the chronotope to the early texts by Bakhtin on time and space. In so doing, time and space are connected to *the act within time and space.* The narratives which I investigate are thus, in accordance with Bakhtin's view of the act, not merely examples from schooling. They reveal the intensity of, and values connected to, personal meetings between human beings, in the context of an (Norwegian) everyday school situation. This is, in my perspective, how the chronotope, as Bakhtin puts it, "makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins" (2006a, p. 250). Will this approach make my study normative? Paradoxically, this might not be the case. In a Bakhtinian perspective, theoretical, ethical norms will not influence life as such. It is the individual act, performed by a responsible individual human being in a once-occurrent historical context, who makes choices in the meeting with the other, which has moral quality. In the following chapter on theory, this will be further elaborated.

Theoretical basis and key concepts

As the introduction shows, this research text will focus on the phenomenons of time and space, in form of the concept of chronotope introduced to literary criticism by the Russian philosopher, literary theorist, and teacher, M. M. Bakhtin (2006a). Linguistically the concept is derived from the Greek words 'chronos', meaning time, and 'topos', meaning place or space. The word "chronotope" itself is not invented by Bakhtin. He writes that he borrows the name "chronotope" from Einstein, to use it for literary purposes. It is not important to Bakhtin what it means in Relativity Theory. "What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time", he writes (2006a, p. 84).

But in "Toward a Philosophy of the Act," it is Kant's philosophy that is the point of departure for Bakhtin's discussion of the phenomenons of time and space. To make the originality of Bakhtin's thinking more visible, I will in the next part of this study give a brief account of Kant's philosophy on time and space, in connection to his ethical imperative. This will create a backdrop for my interpretations and discussions of Bakhtin's philosophy.

Time and Space in Kant's Philosophy

Kant[5] (2000) claims that *space* is an abstraction of our intuitive sensibility, and as such it does not represent a "property at all of any things in themselves nor any relation of them to each other" (p. 159). Space is therefore, in Kant's thinking, an *a priori*[6] necessary representation, on which all other sensitivity or intuition rests. In other words, it is a form by which we judge all our experience, and not an abstraction derived or inducted from the experience itself. Thus, it is not possible to generalize the phenomenon of space from several similar experiences. The primary example of this comes from geometry: "in a triangle two sides together are always greater than the third" (p. 159). This statement is not derived from several experiences.

The consequence of this is that there is essentially one single space. If we talk about several spaces, based on experience, it is only because we divide or separate the single one into parts

---

[5] By no means must my interpretation of Kant be taken as fully elaborated. It is not my intention to be disrespectful, but in this part of the study I am merely interested in creating a platform, from which we can mirror Bakhtin's thoughts.

[6] Exists before all experience.

as a matter of thought. Thus, the single space, as the ultimate form that shapes our experiences, is indivisible, ideal and universal. Space is therefore a condition that makes it possible for us to see things as objects, as something outside ourselves, but at the same time it is also transcendental, which means in this context that it is bound to the appearance of sense objects. Space has no validity outside sense experience, but is at the same time the condition for the experience that something is real (i.e. objectively valid) outside of us.

If we think of different spaces, as parts of the one, single space, they will appear as simultaneous in our perception. *Time,* on the other hand, could appear in our perception as successive, not simultaneous. But different things can exist simultaneously, at the same time. Time is therefore "not an empirical concept that is somehow drawn from an experience" (p. 162). Time is, as space, an *a priori,* given and necessary condition or law. But unlike space, which determines how things appear to us outside ourselves, time is "the form of our inner sense, i.e., of the intuition of our self and our inner state" (p. 163). If we took away space, nothing would appear to us as experience at all, and if everything that could appear was taken away, space would not exist. If we took away time, experience would also be impossible. But if we took away all things that could appear as experience, time would still remain as a "subjective condition of our (human) intuition (which is always sensible, i.e., insofar as we are affected by objects), and in itself, outside the subject, is nothing" (p. 164). This means that we cannot claim that things in themselves are in time, but we can say that things *as they appear to us* are in time. Time is not a condition of things as they are in themselves, but it is rather a transcendental and ideal condition of our subjectivity, by which we relate our sense experiences to each other. Since time has no shape, we tend to think of it by means of analogies, for example that our experiences are related to each other as sequences in a linear progression.

This analysis of time and space is part of what is called the doctrine of transcendental idealism (Guyer & Wood, 2000), which says that the only way we can have any cognition of things is as they appear to us, and not as they are in themselves. This does not mean that things do not exist in themselves, outside of our perception.

The data from our experience are "raw," and to think of them, we form them into categories by help of our *understanding* (as opposed to *reason*). Our understanding structures our sensory experiences. The categories of understanding are universal and valid, and so are our

judgments of experience when these categories are used. Theoretical reason, on the other hand, is a form of thought which is not connected to sensibility and experience. Theoretical or pure reason *infers with* our sensibility with metaphysical ideas, which will be illusory if they are not limited by our sensibility (Guyer & Wood, 2000, p. 5). Thus, it is our understanding that "is the true lawgiver of nature, and the successes of modern science are due to its conduct of its inquiries in accordance with a plan whose ground lies *a priori* in the structure of human thought" (p. 21).

It is precisely the argument that our own thought's decision of how we experience things, that creates the ground for human free will. Reason provides in each human a moral law, because reason has access to how the human will is in itself (not as it appears). But this moral law is only a possibility, until our understanding decides how to live up to this moral demand (Guyer & Wood, 2000).

In the following I will make an attempt to outline Bakhtin's answer to Kant's "transcendental method," and in addition shed some light on other parts of his philosophy.

Time and space in Bakhtin's philosophy

Bakhtin[7] was struggling with the same questions as Kant did, of the connection between cognition and the experience, and ethical or moral responsibilities connected to the act. For Bakhtin, the question was formulated differently, because he rejected the transcendental method that Kant approached the question with. Instead he takes as his starting point *the performed act,* and writes that "[a]ll attempts to force one's way from inside the theoretical world and into actual Being-as-event are quite hopeless" (Bakhtin, 1999, p. 12). He asked himself how it can be made possible to bridge the gap between an act, my unique act, and the (theoretical) moment that constitutes this act inside the culture we live in. The answer he gives is that "from the performed act (and not from the theoretical transcription of it) there is a way out into its content/sense" (ibid), and this way out is through a mediator, which is "an answerable consciousness in an actual deed" (Bakhtin, 1999, p. 12). An act or a deed is an

---

[7] I do not claim to have a full understanding of Bakhtin's texts, or to use them in a fundamentalist way. Rather, I let his texts inspire my own thinking about the issues promoted in this study.

event[8] in "the once-occurrent world," and this deed or event is never a random happening. It is an active choice, made by a responsible person, who sees himself as the only one who can perform that actual, historical, individual act. To be aware of this, to act on it and not letting anyone take one's unique place, is what Bakhtin calls having no alibi in existence; and living life as an answerable/responsible human being. From an act, there is a bridge over to the reflective aspect or the sense/meaning aspect, "which is received and included from within that actually performed act; for the act is actually performed in Being" (ibid).

Responsibility

Bakhtin (1999) illustrates the concepts of twofold responsibility[9] with the metaphor of Janus, the two-faced god. Every human being has a responsibility of every act, a special responsibility for the content or meaning of the act, which is the cultural expression of it through language or art, and a moral responsibility for the act's Being, which means when it is performed in life. But the content, presented or performed in culture, can never be or become the same as, or penetrate, the actual moral and performed or experienced act – or vice versa. There is only one way, according to Bakhtin, that experience and the account of the same experience, can meet, and that is if the linguistic meaning-making can be seen as a "constituent moment" (ibid) in the moral responsibility. The moral responsibility, which shows itself as a particular act, a historically situated, never-repeatable lived experience, is constituted through the content/sense or meaning I make of it, and in this "…whole concrete historicalness of its performance – both of these moments (the content/sense moment and the individual-historical moment) are unitary and indivisible in evaluating that thought as my answerable act or deed" (p. 3).

Both the performed act and the utterance of it through language into cultural expressions will thus be parts of the responsible deed. Language is part of what is "given," and in Bakhtinian terms this would not mean metaphysically given, but rather that the individual, once-occurrent Being is situated in a culture and history that he participates in as he matures and masters the

---

[8] The Russian word that Bakhtin uses (sobytie bytiya) means "the event or co-being of existence," and Bakhtin also calls life "the once-occurrent event of Being" (Bakhtin, 1999).
[9] The translations "answerability" versus "responsibility" of the Russian word *otvetstvennost'* are discussed by Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson in *Mikhail Bakhtin. Creation of a Prosaics*, p. 76. The different translations are connected to how they argue for their view on Bakhtin's development. From this point of view their choice is to translate the same word as "responsibility" in the early texts, but as "answerability" in the later texts. Based on the early text I follow, "Toward a Philosophy of the act," and the fact that the Russian word could have both translations, my choice is to use the translation "responsibility" in the further text. Only in direct quotations the original translation is followed

cultural tools. But calling the act and the cultural expression of it a unity, does not mean that Bakhtin suspends the borders between the two phenomena. He is rather looking for a way in which this duality of the act can be united in a wholeness. The unity thus refers to "the way everything in me forms a unit – so that nothing in a given complex is dispensable or replaceable. Unity, in this sense, means singularity and moral responsibility" (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 75).

First movement: From the performed act to the cultural expression of it
Let me try to illustrate this, to make the significance of these thoughts easier to grasp, and to relate them tentatively to this research. In an educational situation there will be several more or less decisive events during a school day. In a direct one-to-one meeting with, let's say, a reluctant student, or an aggressive one, situations arise where the teacher needs to decide how to act. The choice of action will be one out of many possibilities, and more often than not the choice has to be made so quickly that there is no time for quiet deliberation on beforehand. The teacher acts, and there will be a response from the student, sometimes also from the other classmates. But there is a form of intuitive deliberation going on, in the instant moment before the act is performed. This deliberation is based on what has happened between the actors earlier, and on the historical context the act takes place in. But in the moment of the act, it is pure, without deliberations or reflections. *The act is the performance of the choice, and in this moment the act has moral quality, because it is always an act of "reaching out to another consciousness"* (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 76, my emphasis).

The quote illustrates Bakhtin's discussion with Kant. The moral aspect of an act is not to be measured against either ethical theories or held up as an example to follow. "The attempt to conceive *the ought* as the highest formal category […] is based on a misunderstanding," he writes, and states that "[i]t is pointless to speak of some sort of special *theoretical* ought" (Bakhtin, 1999, p. 4). The morality of an act lays in the fact that it is an answer to a call, a call that is situated in the situation, so to speak. Within the well known theoretical ethical typologies, Bakhtin's approach is not based on duty or consequence, but rather on the situation. But there is more to it than the mere situation. Bakhtin underscores that his approach is not to be understood as a theoretical system or a universal fact. If we do that, we miss the point. "This fact of *my non-alibi in Being,* which underlies the concrete and once-occurrent ought of the responsibly performed act, is not something I come to know of and to cognize but is something I acknowledge and affirm in a unique or once-occurrent manner,"

Bakhtin writes (1999, p. 40). For each act, I take on the responsibility of performing it the way I find to be true from my unique point of view, in that very moment, toward another human being, within the context we both are an individual part of.

Instantaneously after the performed act, when thoughts arise, when it is discussed, or written down, comes the constituent moment of the act. This means, in my understanding, that the act is not *complete* without this cultural expression of it. But the *ought,* the moral aspect of it, lies not in the deliberations before or after (which is the content/sense/meaning-making aspect of the act), but within the performance of the act itself.

The performed act and the cultural expression of it is therefore a unity, as long as the cultural expression comes from within the act, instead of making theoretical claims from outside the act to understand it. To make the cultural expression of an act, what Bakhtin calls to create a unity of the subjective (the performed act) and the objective (culture), requires

> "the entire fullness of the word: its content/sense aspect (the word as concept) as well as its palpable-expressive aspect (the word as image) and its emotional volitional aspect (the intonation of the word) in their unity. *And in all these moments the unitary full word can be answerably valid, i.e., can be the truth [pravda] rather than something subjectively fortuitous"* (p. 31, my emphasis).

What is this unity of the word Bakhtin is speaking of? Again, we must turn to the act, or rather, to the performer, who is the responsible being inside the act. The constant unity can only be understood, not as a norm in the performance, nor as a law of the content/sense or meaning-making part of it, but as an *acknowledgement which I as an answerable, once-occurrent Being puts my signature under, a new signature for each new act* (p. 38-39).

The answerability is thus not something that can be put into universal, ethical rules. Rather, "the act is something around which I wrap my responsibility: the focus is singular and radically personal" (ibid, p. 75).

Second movement: From first philosophy to further abstractions
Bakhtin makes a distinction between the unit of the act and the cultural expressions of it, which he calls "first philosophy," and the more abstract theoretical world. He describes the way from the performed act, via the "first philosophy" to ever more abstract theorizing as a *movement:*

"The closer one moves to theoretical unity (constancy in respect of content or recurrent identicalness), the poorer and more universal is the actual uniqueness (…) The further individual uniqueness moves away from theoretical unity, the more concrete and full it becomes" (p. 39).

Yet, the theorizing or theoretical cognizing is justified, but will be rather technical and not at all the ultimate aim of the abstraction process. The philosopher needs to understand that "abstracting from my own unique place in Being, my *as it were* disembodying of myself, is itself an answerable act or deed that is actualized from my own unique place" (p. 48). But it does only remain an actualization of the responsibility as long as the connection is that "I, the knower, have become answerable and subject to the ought of my cognition" (p.49). This movement in science is a transformation of "the knowing- *of* [*znanie*] into answerable cognition, and it "does not in the least diminish and distort the autonomous truth [*istina*] of theoretical knowledge, but, on the contrary, complements it to the point where it becomes compellently valid truth [*pravda*]" (ibid).

Time, space and axiology

The consequence of Bakhtin's thinking is that time and space are not transcendent structures of our perception. Temporality and spatiality are not theoretical concepts, but belongs in the world of the living and acting human being (Bakhtin, 1999, p. 10). Time and space are "ineluctably tied to *someone who is in a situation"* (Holquist, 2004, p. 152). Holquist investigates the English word "situation," because it has already both time and space tied to it. When we say that "the house is in a good situation," this means that it is situated well, in a good place, according to for instance the view, or the weather conditions on the location. The spatial part of the expression is defined also by elements that are not directly tied to the space. When we use the expression "the current situation," this refers to a special moment, made up not just by time, but by several factors that make us choose this distinct moment instead of another. Both time and space thus have other elements tied to them, and these elements contain evaluation. The temporal and spatial factors of a particular situation are combined with axiology.[10]

Thus, time and space, also according to Holquist (ibid), consists of four elements, not two: "a time, plus its value; and a space, plus its value" (p. 155). Bakhtin's contribution to the philosophy and time and space is to place it within the axiology tied to the individually,

---

[10] Axiology: connected to values (Holquist 2004, p. 152)

historically and socially situated and acting Being; and that he insists that these elements always operate simultaneously and inseparatibly.

Within the act there are different moments, all tied to this axiology. There is the intuitive choice of one performed act out of several possibilities; and the choice of how to express the act culturally, when to do it, and the place to express it. Further abstractions will always, according to Bakhtin, require evaluations and choices.

Dialogicality

The thought that time, space, and the act are always connected to someone who is in a situation, means that this "someone" is always also dialogical. There is only space to give a brief account of some important traits of Bakhtin's dialogicality here.

The basic aspect of dialogue is what could be called the ontological meaning of the word, which in this case could simply mean a dialogical worldview. "Life by its very nature is dialogic," Bakhtin writes (2006b, p. 293). Dialogue in this sense is therefore more than words; it is the only way of being in the world. When a person is born, he

> "participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium" (ibid).

This dialogue does not end, because if the single life is ended, the "world symposium" continues. As Morson & Emerson (1990) puts it; "[t]o be sure, particular dialogues may break off (they never truly end), but dialogue itself is always going on" (p. 50). It is in this dialogue, at a particular historic moment, a person is situated.

The other aspect of dialogue I will mention takes as its starting point that it is again acting humans who are in a dialogue, not theoretical or abstract parts of language. Here we talk about *the utterance,* which is not a linguistic element, not even a sentence. However, an utterance *could* be as small as a single word, but also a "large novel or a scientific treatise" (M. M. Bakhtin, 2006, p. 71). The beginning and the end of an utterance is absolute, Bakhtin writes, and what decides these beginnings and endings is the "change of speaking subjects" (p.

72). This implies that an utterance is always directed to someone, and that the utterance is finalized, in the meaning of "*the possibility of responding to it*" (p.76). This is why the utterance is "extralinguistic" and needs to be "embodied" (M.M. Bakhtin, 2006b, p. 183) to be part of a dialogic relationship, which means that the utterance has an author that leaves his individual mark on it (M. M. Bakhtin, 2006, p. 75).

That an utterance is finalized does not rule out the other. On the contrary, it gives room for the other to answer. A contrast to this is *monologism,* which

> "at its extreme, denies the existence outside itself of another consciousness with equal rights and equal responsibilities, another *I* with equal rights (*thou*). With a monologic approach (in its extreme or pure form) *another person* remains wholly and merely an *object* of consciousness, and not another consciousness. No response is expected from it that could change everything in the world of my consciousness […] Monologue manages without the other"(M.M. Bakhtin, 2006b, p. 292-293).

The monologue is therefore closed, as opposed to the dialogue, which is open-ended. Dialogue is not finished, it is always becoming. An interesting part of this open-endedness is what Bakhtin calls a *loophole.* The loophole is a possibility of changing the meaning of a word, and also, as I interpret it, a possibility for the other to interpret the word differently or add to its meaning. The consciousness also has a loophole, writes Bakhtin, because it is always a possibility left open to the other for having a different opinion about oneself than the one by which I define myself (Bakhtin, 1990b). About the word with the loophole, he writes "[t]his potential other meaning, that is, the loophole left open, accompanies the word like a shadow" (M.M. Bakhtin, 2006b, p. 233).

I relate the notion of loophole to what Bakhtin writes about *excess of seeing.* When two "whole persons" meet, the one sees something the other does not see. The other cannot see certain parts of his body, and not what is behind him. "As we gaze at each other, two different worlds are reflected in the pupils of our eyes. […] It is possible, upon assuming an appropriate position, to reduce this difference of horizons to a minimum, but in order to annihilate this difference completely, it would be necessary to merge into one, to become one and the same person" (Bakhtin, 1990b, p. 23). The fact that it is *not* possible to "become one and the same person," leaves the door open for both to enrich each other's world.

It is exactly this open-endedness and the loophole of the word I want this study to have. That is why I invited the reader to be a co-traveler on this journey in the introduction, because the reader sees what I do not see. The meaning-making of the text is a joint responsibility for me and the reader.

Method

Dialogicality and Bakhtin's time-space philosophy are not only the theoretical perspective I have chosen for this study, it is also the ontological backdrop of the whole text. I believe this creates coherence in the study, which contributes to its validity. In order to bring this a little further, I point to the fact that Bakhtin transformed his time-space philosophy into the concept of *chronotope,* a device for literary analysis[11]. The chronotope is also my tool for analyzing the material I have chosen for this study. When it comes to the dialogicality and the open-endedness, I see my text as an utterance into the discourse on marginalized students and the aims of education.

In addition, this is an explorative study when it comes to method, which adds new perspectives to the research community. Autoethnography is a recognized method (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Holman-Jones, 2005), although it cannot be said to be *one* method. Those who perform autoethnography have to create their own way of doing it (Holman-Jones, 2005). The common trait is the narrativity based on the researcher's own experience. As a consequence, the researcher needs to be inventive, and have the courage to walk new paths. The narrative turn in qualitative method has been present since the late sixties (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003), and thus the narrativity in this study is not new. The contribution this study makes into the field of research method is therefore the way I have chosen to perform the narrative autoethnographic method. In particular, this means that I bring Bakhtin's philosophy of time, space, and the act into the study, in combination with his further development of the chronotope as a device for literary analysis. It is my aim in this chapter to put the method on display, to make it visible to the research community.

By taking the dialogical perspective, I confirm that this text does not bring any final answers. Instead I want it to be part of a conversation, where the reader is the dialogue-partner. I have seen the issues under investigation from my point of view, and even though I am asking critical questions to my own reflections in the text, it is still from my point of view I can say anything at all. The reader is thus crucial as the co-constructor of meaning, and for adding another perspective in the reading process.

---

[11] I base this view of a connection between the early text "Toward a philosophy of the act" and "Forms of time and the chronotope in the novel" on Morson & Emerson (1990).

The constructivist research paradigm which is implied in these first paragraphs, assumes that there are no universal truths or Grand theory (Hatch, 2002; Spry, 2001). The world I see is a construction I have made, and there are no possibilities for going behind this construction and see the world as it "really" is. I "cannot know an aboriginal reality," because "there is none" (Bruner, 1986, p. 158). I am bound to see things from the uniqueness of my point of view, as Bakhtin writes (1999).

If there are no universal truths, and no Grand theory, how can a study like this be validated? As Rorty (1991) puts it: no one has the "God's eye standpoint," but who will then decide what is good and valid research? Here I agree with Rorty (ibid), who suggests that instead of "objectivity" we could do "equally well by the idea of a community which strives after both intersubjective agreement and novelty" (p. 13). I argue that both intersubjective agreement and novelty are equally important. Intersubjective agreement in the research community is important, and in my study this is taken care of by bringing in other voices with similar approaches to research as mine. I also follow the mains structures of the genre I write in. My study is open with regards to my approach, because I bring the whole body of material (four narratives) into the text. Moreover, I analyze them by means of tools which I explain both theoretically and by examples of how they have been used before, and the reader can follow the analysis step by step. This kind of transparency makes the text open for the investigation and judgment of others (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2006).

But the intersubjectivity must not be so firm that novelty is avoided. There must be room for new knowledge. If not, intersubjectivity will tend toward total consensus and thus become a different kind of "objectivism." Rorty (1991) suggests the concept of solidarity instead of intersubjectivity, and that we should ask ourselves " What are the limits of our community? Are our encounters sufficiently free and open? Has what we have recently gained in solidarity cost us our ability to listen to outsiders who are suffering? To outsiders who have new ideas?" (p.13).

I appreciate very much his pragmatist attempt to bring "political questions rather than metaphysical or epistemological questions" (ibid) into the research community, in order to make research contribute to a democratic society. The solidarity in this study lies with marginalized students, with teachers, with the research community and with the political will to create a better and more inclusive democratic community. Still, the aims of this study are

epistemological in addition to the political profile. I intend to seek new knowledge, based on my research methods and the material I investigate.

The political profile in this study is created by throwing the analyses of the narratives about marginalized students into relief with the Norwegian Government's white paper which also discusses the issue of marginalization in education and society. Although we share the same concern, the chapter on discussion will show that we have different answers to the problem. May aim in this regard is to contribute with an alternative, not merely criticize.

Autoethnography and narrativity

The four narratives presented in this study are based on my experience as a teacher in upper secondary school. Some of them go back as far as ten years; others are from more recent experience. The main point of bringing the narratives into this study is that the situations are quite recognizable to others with teaching experience. I believe there are others who have been as bewildered and without educational "tools" as I was, even though I at a certain point went through teacher training. This study is therefore not about me as a teacher or about how good or bad I was at what I was doing. I am bringing the narratives in to point at some important issues. One issue is that teacher training does not always prepare prospective teachers for what they meet in practice. This study could be a contribution to teacher training. A second issue is that policy makers do not always see what could be done for marginalized pupils or students, particularly because they often take a viewpoint on a system level. I believe that the aims of education need revising. This study points to new aims. A third issue is that this explorative study could contribute to educational research in different ways. All these points will be discussed in the last chapter called "some possible implications."

Autoethnography

Autoethnography has some similarities to autobiography, but my research does not reveal or concentrate on my life story, not even on my life history as a teacher. Goodson (2000) calls for a renewal of the interest for the life histories of teachers, to gain more insight into the complex concept of education. I support this, but I think that my approach also will contribute to this kind of insight. According to Goodson, there is a call for "a model for human action that contains both situational and biographic/historical data, and that can show the mutual connection between these factors" (p. 40, my transl.). This study is an attempt to explore, not a model, but a way of comprehending educational situations in their complexity, with human

beings in interaction both with each other, with the context they are situated in, and the life stories they carry with them.

Therefore this research is not about being a teacher as such, even if it reveals some particular sides of being a teacher. It is not about teaching per se, either, even if the concept of "teaching" might be a close description if one should put this research under some label. It is not about classroom practice, because the situations described bring the teacher and the students out of the classroom on several occasions. What I am after, is to scrutinize some particular moments or events that have arisen during my interaction with students; events that seemed to be heavy with meaning and that eventually came out as turning points for both me and the students involved. These events did not happen in a vacuum, nor did they just "happen." They were conscious choices of acts, and it is those acts I have revealed and investigated through the analyses of the narratives.

An ethnographic research intends to see the individual person in a social or cultural setting. In a similar way autoethnography researches "the self" situated in society, culture, politics, and in history (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Holman-Jones, 2005). "The self" in the narratives of my study is a constructed or textual "self" or "I." A text can never tell the "whole story" of a person, because there are always something left out. In the narratives I have captured situations from life. But the act of making the situations and persons textual, contributes in making them fixed, as opposed to life, which is floating and in flux. This is one of the basic elements of autoethnography, which is grounded in the "crisis of representation" in the theory of science. This crisis is a discussion of two important elements in science. The first is the question of who is represented in a research text, when the researcher has the power of writing his informants into the text the way she wants, and in addition is not able to step out of her own horizon. The second and main question for this study is how life is represented in the text. The question is if one can read a research text and validate it with regards to how good the correlation is between data and text. One can easily imagine the positivist shadow behind these questions, which is the shadow all qualitative research has been struggling with. In autoethnography, the basic thought is that what should be researched is the text, and that the life represented is the life that is presented in the text – and nothing else (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

The narratives

Even though this is a textual study, it is possible to ask who I give voice to in this text. Since it is autoethnographic, the obvious answer would be me, I give myself a voice. But in the four narratives in this study the students' voices will be heard through the narratives. Let me stop a little at this statement, because it needs critical reflection. First of all, the power is in my hand, because I have written the narratives the way they appear now. Nobody else knows if the students' voices in the narratives are "real." In fact, ethical considerations have made it imperative for me not to reveal the students' identity. They put their trust in me as their teacher, and I do not want to break that trust. As a consequence, the students are all given fictional names. Particular traits that would make them easily recognizable are changed, and this point forced me to change quite a lot in some of the stories with regards to the "real" persons. The names of the schools they attended are not revealed.

Will these alterations make the stories pure fiction? James Clifford (1986) claims that good and coherent ethnographic writing very well may be called fiction, although this "may raise empiricist hackles" (p. 6). He argues that recent textual theory shows that fiction does no longer connote to "false" as in "merely opposed to truth" (ibid). Cultural and historical truths are always partial, he argues. It might not be controversial to call ethnographic writing fiction if this means "made" or constructed, but Clifford takes it one step further, and argue that "it is important to preserve the meaning not merely of making, but also of making up, of inventing things not actually real" (ibid). If this oxymoron is kept sharp, Clifford argues, then the rhetoric in the fictions "empowers *and subverts* their message" (ibid).

To illustrate what Clifford writes, I will reveal my first attempts to write the narratives in this study. The narratives were constantly rewritten over a period of several months. I had co-readers to almost every draft. As I was writing, the fact that I was not sure what I was looking for became clear to me. This process is part of an analysis that is previous to the First and Second analysis further down in this study. Rewriting the stories several times made them more readable. The more I wrote and rewrote, the more focused the stories became. Leaving some details out, underscoring others, made me aware of what was at stake in the situations, and what was worth investigating.

The writing-rewriting process helped me choose which narratives to bring into the study, of the nine I first wrote. I ended up with four. The process also made me realize what parts of the

stories that needed to be left out in order to keep the anonymity of the students intact. But it was in addition a way of refining the rhetorical points of the narratives. In accordance to the autoethnographic method, I wanted the narratives to be evocative and communicative. I also wanted them to "stand on their own feet" so to speak, which means that I wanted them to illustrate some points, as they were, before they were analyzed in the text. This proved to be almost impossible, because as most narratives they are so complex that one could interpret them in several ways and find new themes and points every time. But I knew a little about what I wanted them to reveal, and this intention governed the way I formed them.

In choosing what students and situations I wanted to investigate, I made some criteria. After all, it could have been hundreds of stories to tell from over ten years of experience. I wanted the students to be marginalized in different ways. The plurality of background and personal history was important to show two of my points: the diversity of situations a teacher encounters in her practice, and that marginalized students are not alike; they mirror the plurality of society. But I wanted the narratives to have turning points that changed the situations, because these "turnings" was what puzzled me the most in practice. I asked myself again and again what made some situations open up and turn dramatically, while others stayed locked and apparently without hope. I know that other teachers ask themselves the same questions. These questions were the incentive of my choice of what stories to tell and how to tell them. Thus, the message is "empowered and subversive" as Clifford writes.

The same questions were also the reason why I chose the autoethnographic method. In order to tell stories like these based on experience, one has to be very close to the situations and stay there for a long period (a minimum of one year) to be able to follow the often very small steps of change. I do not believe it would have been possible to investigate these situations in any other way, with any other method than autoethnography. In the next chapter I will elaborate how the analyses of the narratives have been done, first of all with an attempt to explain the chronotope.

The Chronotope

"The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied" (2006, p. 250). This is the most famous statement from Bakhtin about chronotopical structures of narrative texts. By this he means that the chronotope is the center of the narrative, from where the events unfold, where meaning is created, from where the narrative communicates with the

reader or the listener. The chronotope makes time materialize in space, "time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins" (ibid). "[S]pace becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (p. 84). In short, the chronotope makes the narrative come alive and become communicative. The narrative can contain elements of philosophy, abstractions, ideas, cause-and effect-analyses, but these elements will "gravitate toward the chronotope and through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work" (p. 250).

Bakhtin gives the narrative chronotopes names derived from what is the basic motif of the text. In his analyses of the narrative structures, he starts with the ancient Greek texts, and wanted to fulfill the analyses of texts throughout the history of literature, up to the modern novel, exemplified by the novels of Dostoevsky. What he did and the way he did it illuminates the way different types of chronotopes can be identified and distinguished, and how they help unfold the meaning of a narrative.

Here I will merely bring a couple of examples of his chronotopic typology, to illustrate this type of work. Bakhtin analyzes the well-known Greek narrative "The Golden Ass of Apuleius," where the hero undergo some changes in his life, due to some character-forming, remarkable situations he finds himself in when he is transformed to an ass. The chronotope in this narrative is characterized by the fact that time is separated into moments that cannot be foreseen. These moments are all "controlled by one force – *chance"* (p.94). Bakhtin calls this "adventure-time." Space is, on the other hand, abstract, the events could have taken place anywhere. The Golden Ass walks around in everyday life, meeting everyday situations, the difference between him and the others is the fact that he is an ass – and the way he chooses to act shows that he undergoes some changes – metamorphoses – in his life. But these changes have no effect on society around him, "[t]herefore, metamorphosis has a merely personal and unproductive character" (p. 119). Bakhtin calls this type of chronotope "adventure novel of everyday life."

Two other types of chronotope will be mentioned here. They are both connected to the ancient biography and autobiography in Greece. The first type is found in the works of Plato, particularly *Apology* of Socrates and *Phaedo.* This type is also about metamorphoses, but in a more strict way: the main character goes through different phases, distinct from each other, all

characterized by a process of seeking "authentic knowing" (p. 130). The chronotope of these texts are called "the life course of one seeking true knowledge" (ibid). The second type is somewhat different. Here the main character is putting his whole life on display, "either as verbal praise of a sivic-political act or as an account of the self" (p. 131). It is not the internal, private life that is revealed, for in this time and space in history there is no conception of what "private" or "internal" can be. Everything about a man's life is open and official. Nevertheless, to reveal oneself or another person is to make his life (even more) public. This is connected to the public space in ancient Greek life, the *agora.* Bakhtin calls this chronotope "the exterior real-life chronotope" (ibid).

These examples are not very important in themselves in this study. I bring them in to illustrate how the chronotopical analysis can be performed. Bakhtin thinks that they are examples of how time and space work in these literary historical settings. That indicates to me that he does not mean that anyone should try and use these patterns directly on texts from other historical epochs. The intention behind his analysis of these Greek texts, and later also other texts, is in my opinion to show how one can explore the chronotope of any text, to find what a particular text carries within it of potential meaning, situated within a historical context.

This will be my task in the analysis of my narratives as well. As we remember from my interpretation of Bakhtin's philosophy of time, space, and the act in the theory chapter, the only way to make the individual experience and the cultural meaning-making meet is to think of them as one unity with two aspects or faces. And the chronotope is a concept in which time and space always appears simultaneously. The analyses will show how productive a thought this actually is.

Performing the analyses

For those who are unfamiliar with narrative structures, I will draw the main lines here, and connect them to the way I have performed the chronotopic analyses. In a traditional narrative structure there is a beginning, which often gives information on time and place, and an introduction of the main characters. The story moves on, either because things happen that contribute in building the story, or because the characters are active and make things happen. Either way, there are small moments of tension that builds expectations in the reader that something will happen that reveals what this is all about.

This revelation is often called the peak of tension or the turning point of the story. This turning point always create some sort of change in the characters' life, and it sheds light into what has happened and what is to come in the story. The turning point creates understanding in the reader or the listener. This understanding can be about the story itself, but often a good narrative create new understanding also of the reader's own life. When a narrative works like this, it could be said to be "true." Not in the sense of logical truth, but it is true to its genre, and to its mission. It opens "to dilemmas, to the hypothetical, to the range of possible worlds that a text can refer to [and] renders the obvious less so, the unknowable less so as well, matters of value more open to reason and intuition" writes Bruner (1986, p. 159). This has been the intention for me when I constructed the narratives.

I have used this structure to build the narratives, because the pattern is well known. When I analyze by means of the chronotope, I identify the coordinates of time and space in the narrative first. Then I investigate how the different time and space coordinates make the narrative come alive and vibrating, and seen like this, time and space is a very productive force in the narrative. I identify the small moments of action that builds the tension, and ultimately find the peak of tension which turns the story in a new direction. This is what I call a *core event.* This core event is always connected to a particular time and space, which I also identify, and which I call the *core chronotope.* It is important to name it the core chronotope, because there are several other minor chronotopes in each narrative. The play between the chronotopes enriches the life in the narratives immensely. But the core event and the core chronotope are what create the possibility of change, and what this change is about and how it became real is the main aim of the investigation.

The narratives are based on my own experience, and this makes them very familiar and personal to me. It has been a very important goal of the performance of this study that they should be brought into a new context, the research context, not as merely personal stories, but as good research material. In order to open them up to others and remove them from my personal sphere, I have constructed what I in the introduction called "layers." The layers create distance between me and the personal experience in the narratives. The first layer is called "First analysis," an analysis that follows each narrative and is very closely connected to them. The chronotope is used as a tool in this analysis. The next layer is "Second analysis," and this analysis has a higher level of abstraction. It is also an analysis of the four narratives as one unit, and identifies four new chronotopes which could be called the main motifs or

themes of the narratives as a unit. These findings from Second analysis are brought into the chapter of Discussion, where they are discussed in light of the time/space/act-philosophy of Bakhtin, and they are in addition seen in light of the Norwegian Government's white paper.

Narratives and analyses: into the marginal zone

> *"...outside the commonwealth is the empire of the passions, war, fear, poverty, nastiness, solitude, barbarity, ignorance, savagery; within the commonwealth is the empire of reason, peace, security, wealth, splendour, society, good taste, the sciences and good-will."*[12]

Narrative 1: Being here instead of there

It is in the autumn semester, and I am in a class teaching Norwegian language and literature, in a group of fifteen students from vocational school. They are not paying attention, and none of them are doing any homework. I have tried out every single pedagogical method I can think of to motivate them, and I am a creative person. None of it helps, and right now I ask them what we are going to do about the problem.

I catch a glimpse of one pair of eyes finally paying attention. It's Jack[13], the guy who most vividly has expressed his resistance to the schoolwork. Now he bends forward, with his eyes fixed on me, and he says: "Don't you see? Don't you understand that we are stupid? We have understood a long time ago that we are not able to learn any more. That's why we are here in this class, doing vocational training, instead of doing the Upper Secondary Education. Can't you just let us stay in your class, and stop bothering about your teaching?"

The other guys nod and murmur "yes," and "exactly." They lean back; playing with whatever small things they have on their desks, trying to look indifferent. A deep sigh works its way out of me as I slowly grab a chair and sit down with them. What has cemented a "truth" like that in their minds? I ask them about that, and all of a sudden they explode with chaotic talk. After a while I calm them down. "Let's put aside both books and curriculum for a while," I suggest. "And then you can tell me your story, one by one. We can also talk about other things, and have a mix of oral and writing classes. How does this sound?"

 "I don't know how to write a text," one of the guys admits later. "Well, it's a matter of putting one sentence after the other. Of course it is more to it than that, but it's a good start. I can show you in detail how to make a story by using this principle," I tell him. He looks

---

[12] Thomas Hobbes: *On the Citizen.* (Ed: Richard Tuck & Michael Silverthorne 1998, Cambridge University Press), p. 116.

[13] All the names in all the narratives are fictional

surprised, and utters more than a little skepticism about his ability to do even that. After some negotiation he finally agrees to give it a try. I look at Jack. An incredulous smile plays in his face. "We can tell our story? Sure you want to listen to it? And then we can talk and write about other things? What other things? Cars? Films?" "Yes", I answer firmly, "I want to listen to your story, and yes, you can talk and write about cars and films and music and whatever."

The next months we do just that. They tell school stories that make me feel cold to the bones, about being in special classes together with pupils with all sorts of learning disabilities, emotional troubles, violence and fighting, some of them highly intelligent but just tired of mechanically being told what to do without anyone asking what they would really like or need to learn. Quite often the special classes had no teacher; they were given an assignment, and had to make the best out of it. Clearly they did nothing at all.

And then we talk about the funny things in their lives, what makes them happy and inspired. After a while, they start writing. "What am I going to do next?" Jack says, having written one sentence. I look at him, and sense that all the others are paying close attention. "What would you say if you were going to tell me this?" I ask. "You mean, like, orally?" He asks. "Yes." "I would say…" and he starts telling me a long story. "Stop! Again, from the top, one sentence at a time," I tell him. So he does, and I tell him to write down each new sentence. I also ask him questions to let him know that he has to explain things, not just make statements.

Soon he has filled half the page with writing, and he looks at it, amazed. Then he looks at me. "Is this what it takes, one sentence at a time, like you were going to tell someone about it?" "Yes," I smile, "that's what it takes. And when you have written it all, you can start working at the text to make it better." Inspired by their friend's progress, the other guys won't just sit there. Some start writing, some wants me to hear their story and then stop them to help them write it down. Slowly, very slowly, their stories take form, both the written and the oral ones. I show them their progress, step by step. By Christmas, they know: They are still able to learn.

First analysis of "Being here instead of there"

In this narrative there are two parallel stories. The most obvious one is about what takes place in the classroom. The other story is about the students' previous schooling experience, which, paradoxically, has contributed to their understanding that they are not able to learn. As will be

pointed out; the place in the narrative where the second story is revealed is marked by time coordinates in a particular way.

But in the main narrative, the first coordinates of time are marked by "autumn semester" and "by Christmas." Other markers point to patterns of actions that have taken place previously in the class, over some time: "None of them are doing any homework," "I have tried out…" One sentence points toward a first turn of the situation: "I catch a glimpse of one pair of eyes *finally* paying attention." This suggests that the teacher suddenly sees one single student, as if he stands out from a mass that constitutes the "class." The word "finally" underpins the fact that it has taken a long time to reach this point. It marks the hope of a shift in the heavy, worn out everyday classroom life, a shift toward a better understanding of what is going to take place inside the space that now, probably, will change character. At the moment when eyes meet, both with new attention, something can happen.

The next sentence in the narrative gives a name, Jack. "Now he bends forward, with his eyes fixed on me." Jack is moving in space (bends forward), with his eyes fixed on something in that space ("me"). And he does it *now*. This movement in space underscores that the moment is of vital importance; otherwise Jack would not have come out of his hiding in the mass. It is like a painting of Caravaggio, the great Italian painter from the 17th century. Some of his paintings were rather dark, but his use of light was remarkable. From a hidden source the main person in the situation of a painting stands out in a ray of light, making the situation alive and tense, and the viewer is drawn into the momentous situation by the powerful movement of this tension. The main figure stands out, but without the darkness that makes up the background, he would not have appeared that powerful. The simultaneity of figure and ground in a painting of Caravaggio is a visualization of the simultaneity of time and space in the chronotope. In the narrative, Jack is the sudden power in the situation, which draws the teacher (and the reader) into the tension of the moment in this chronotope.

The teacher releases the tension by asking them what has led to the conclusion that they can't learn. This is an active choice, which turns the attention away from her and her failing teaching efforts and over to the students. It is a choice of a new value to act upon: the students' needs. In addition, the time marker indicates a second turn in the narrative: "*All of a sudden* they explode with chaotic talk." But the pace of the narrative quickly slows down,

with the teacher calming the students. She remains in control, which is marked by "*then* you can tell me," *after* some negotiation," "*the next months* we do just that."

"That" means that the students tell their stories of previous schooling. The description ends with this statement: "Quite often the special classes *had* no teacher; they *were given* an assignment, and *had* to make the best out of it. Clearly they *did* nothing at all."
The use of the preterite form of the verbs is the lead to the understanding of two parallel narratives. The main narrative is told in present, and the shift of tense refers to the students' past, which is the content of the second or parallel narrative. But the past is not history for these guys. The past is alive and matters here and now, and Jack's utterance creates a constituent moment in the acts of past times: "Don't you see? Don't you understand that we are stupid?" Suddenly, he can verbalize what has happened, and how this affects his life in the present learning situation. In this moment past and presence are constituted as a wholeness of reality. Within the narrative structure, this presence of the past is made possible to understand by the sudden shift of grammatical tense.

What makes a person reveal something like this about himself, not to mention that he obviously thinks he is the spokesperson of the whole group? Jack's question creates tension around him. The others try to look indifferent, but mumble their support to Jack's remark. Jack is provoked by the teacher's efforts to drag them into the learning situations she is trying to create. But there is something in the situation that gives him courage to show how provoked he is. His question is more a demand than a question to be answered directly. He surely knows enough about schooling not to expect a positive answer to his outburst. What are the events leading up to this turning point of the narrative? Very little is said about that, only the description of the teacher's impression of the students' lack of interest. May be it has something to do with the fact that she is clearly on the verge of giving up? She is putting down her guard of didactical thinking, showing a human face of bewilderness, even reaching out a hand to the students in a different way than before.

They grab this hand, reluctantly at first, but then with increasing eagerness. A third turn in the narrative is created by the time coordinates "*then* we talk about the funny things in their lives," and "*after a while,* they start writing." At first glance the peak of tension in the whole narrative could be interpreted as the moment when Jack utters his frustration. But there is a deeper tension, between the concrete school day and the experience from previous schooling,

which for the students is more real than the theoretic world the teacher tries to impose on them. This tension is exposed when the students start telling their stories, first orally, then in writing. This *core event* in the narrative is a merging of the past into the present, into texts with a content they disclose sentence by sentence, into a form that they previously did not master.

These texts are the construction of a space, where past and present merge, but they also have a new future pointed out in their writing, based on the slowly acquired knowledge that they still can learn. These texts are therefore also the *core chronotope* within the main narrative. But the texts can also be seen as a place where the students and the teacher meet in a different way. Thus, the texts become the metaphor of the main aspect of the core event: the creation of a new relationship between the teacher and the students, and between the students themselves. Jack's first provoked and provocative utterance was like throwing a stone into calm water; the water is stirred and there are waves like concentric circles in an even wider formation. The first circle is the change from passivity in the classroom to activity, the next the oral telling of their stories, and then the writing of the texts. But the last circle, which connects all the waves to the whole sea, is the creation of new trust – in their self, their ability to learn, and in their ability to form new, fruitful relationships.

But there is another chronotopic factor to consider in this narrative, which is not mentioned directly. The class is situated in a certain, not specified, geographical place. They are also in a classroom. But there is an element that contributes in the creation of another type of space, within which the teacher and the students are moving. This is the governmental instructions about schooling. The teacher takes it into her own hands *not* to follow the curriculum in this class, which would tell her to make a steady progression throughout the school year. By means of the chronotope, one could say that she is choosing not to work in a steady linear progression, but rather let the concentric circles from the initial act lead the work. By putting "aside both books and curriculum for a while," a situation which apparently lasts for several months, she creates room (e.g. time and space) to do things in a different order and another way. Some inner negotiation has taken place, which makes her almost undermine the clear instructions from the government.

What can the background be, and the deliberation behind, this choice, an act that could have severe consequences had it not turned out well? An obvious reasoning could be that if she

continued the prescribed progression, not taking into account that the students did not believe in their ability to learn, both the final marks and an exam would reveal exactly that: They would appear as not able, or not willing, to learn. If she took the chance of doing things in a different way, based on the information Jack provided her with, the students might not turn out worse than if the curriculum was followed. The chance would still be there of improving the students' learning, if not that year, then may be later in their lives.

But the chronotope can be used in order to turn this momentum another notch. The key to a deeper understanding lies in Jack's first utterance: "We have understood a long time ago that we are not able to learn any more. That's why we are here in this class, doing vocational training, instead of doing the general studies." The spatiality of this remark lies in "being here instead of there." This remark is also axiologically charged, because it is based on the assumption that "there" is better. Better in the eyes of society, or in their own eyes, or in the teacher's eyes? No matter whose "eyes" this view is based on, it inflicts on their perception of themselves and their place in education and in society. Jack implies that the teacher is using too much time on things that belong to another place – the academic classes, not the vocational training classes. He obviously feels provoked by that, and he acts on this provocation, by sending it back to the teacher. He seems to mean that it is she who should find a different place/space/topos, not they.

In the eyes of the students, the teacher is bringing chronos from another space into the present topos. This means that the conception of study progression (chronos) found in the curriculum, which is formed in a theoretical space apart from the reality of the situation at hand, is brought into the dysfunctional learning space of the present situation. In the eyes of the students, she is acting in a u-topian way. She is out of the present topos and chronos as they perceive it, doing the utopian attempt to bring them over into another space, spending time trying to make them learn things that do not belong to their topos. In this narrative, topos/space has several meanings. In addition, it could be interpreted as social class. This clash of worlds has both structural and personal implications. Not only is the teacher trying to push them into another social class, she is also making efforts to turn their identity into something that in their perception it is not, until they find a way to reach her and they can meet in the relational space.

The act of the teacher thus can bee seen as rooted in a discovery of the expansive gap between two different chronotopes, based in two colliding narratives. The teacher's perception of education and her task as a teacher is based on her education and the curriculum. She initially has an arsenal of teaching methods, but "none of it helps." Why not? Her "narrative" is based on the understanding of the teacher as the supportive organizer, who shares her knowledge and aids the students in their work. The students' "narrative" is based on traumatic experiences of schooling and the view that a practitioner in vocational training does not need too much theoretic knowledge. This places them not only in different roles, but different social classes; even with totally different goals for being in the classroom. Jack's remark opens up this extreme disparity for her, and she understands that no educational method can bridge this gap. They need a different space to meet in, and consequently, the time schedule and progression of the curriculum do not fit. In other words, they need to create a new narrative together, which can be the basis of a new chronotope. Since every narrative has its own chronotope, the teacher and the students meet initially with different chronotopes, which clash dramatically. The initial chronotope of the class practice, is the one of "being neither here nor there." The new chronotope is that of creating a new narrative, which is made by their new effort to learn and their collaboration in the concrete oral and written stories. Their written stories grow, and finally the old story of not being able to learn (the students) and the teacher as the provider of learning strategies and teaching methods (the teacher) is changed to a new story. The main motif in that new story is that of the changed relation, or rather, the creation of a real relationship. The new chronotope could thus be called the chronotope of relation.

Narrative 2: The abyss

Julia is one of my students in a class in General Studies, where I teach Norwegian language and literature. I am also the head teacher of the class. The students are supposed to have written several shorter and more extended essays from school start in August, and now it is October. In spite of my repeated challenges, Julia has not handed in one single text. It is a real worry if she will be given final marks when the semester is over.

One day I tell Julia that we need to talk. She stops reluctantly on her way out of the classroom. "Why are you not giving me any texts?" I confront her. "You are aware of the consequences of not answering the assignments, and besides, I cannot help improving your writing if I don't see a single text of yours." She first looks down. Then she looks at me with a twinkle in her

eye. "But the assignments are so boring," she says, "I am not at all turned on by them, and I have found that it is impossible for me to write about something that gives me so little head start." I feel a little awkward by her bluntness, but also intrigued and surprised. "I write a lot, you see, mostly by night, when the house is quiet. But about totally different subjects than those you give us," she says. Her skin is pale, with shadows under her eyes. I can see that she has not slept too much lately. "Ok," I say. "What if you write about anything you like for a while, and hand it in as texts for me to read and give you feedback on. Perhaps they could also serve as background for your marks." She smiles faintly, but nods, agreeing to the deal.

The first text she hands in is very short. It seems to have been written in a dark mood. In style it is almost cryptic, and although I try my best, it is not possible for me to find it meaningful. When I tell her this, she grabs the paper, and curls it into a little ball with a deep sigh. She is on her way out of the room without looking at me. "Wait," I say, "I can show you what I don't understand, and probably give some suggestions about how to make the text longer and also more readable." She hesitates for a while. Then she slowly uncurls the paper ball, and we sit down to talk about her text. She is most certainly not in the mood to give me right in my reading of the text, but she listens carefully. She even laughs a couple of times when I show her how the text might be read and interpreted. Her intention as a writer has been totally different from those readings. We agree that she is going to rewrite the text, and try to make another text as well during the next week.

She seems to be in a better mood when she hands in two texts a week later. The rewritten one is definitely improved, and I begin to enjoy her fantasy and creative writing. I decide that I will suggest to her to make a sequence to the text, either follow up the story as it is, or write a Chapter two.

The second text is different. It is written in first person, but I cannot decide if it is a fictional narrative or a very personal story. The story is about a person who is awake at night, in a dark mood, and fantasizes about entering another world or dimension. This narrated person inflicts pain by cutting the body with a sharp blade. The blood, and the pain from the blade, gives a dark satisfaction for a short while. I feel my heart beat hard and upset from worries about my student.

Before I can decide what to do with the text, she hands me another one. I tell her I want to speak with her again - very soon, I say. She nods, and we decide to meet the following day. This new text is even darker than the former. It's almost suicidal, like she is standing at the edge of an abyss, deciding if she wants to let herself fall in or not.

When we meet in the conference room I put her texts on the table in front of us. "I can't treat these texts like any other written material," I say. My voice sounds calmer than I feel. "At least I feel that we need to talk a little about how things are going with you first, and if these texts are reflections of that." A faint smile appears and fades like a wind across her face. "Did you think I was about to kill myself?" She asks. "That was one of the thoughts that crossed my mind," I admit. "Don't worry, I'm not," she proclaims. "I have been thinking about it earlier, but not at the moment. My texts were a mixture of the thoughts I had back then, some dreams I have had at night, and a need to write about dark matters." "Why do you have this need, and why do you spend the nights writing?" I ask.

"I write at night because that's the only time I can be by myself," she explains. "In daytime I have to look after the twins, and the family dog, and my horse. My grandmother also needs some help almost every day." "But what about your parents?" I ask. "My mother is filled with grief since my father committed suicide a while ago," she tells me. The abyss is there, lying underneath her calm and simple words. "You should not carry all this alone," I say, meeting her white face and dark eyes. "You can clearly talk to me, but you should consider getting some more qualified help from the school psychologist." "I'm not crazy!" she immediately states. I smile. "I know you are not, but it is merely to take some of the load off your shoulders." She reflects on this for a while. "Ok," she finally says, "as long as I can quit whenever I like." We talk for a while longer, and agree to meet again regularly.

In the next meetings, which we decide to have also the next semester, we do not go into her personal or family background a lot. She is getting help from others for that. Instead we concentrate on her texts, and she is opening up more and more for seeing her texts in different ways. She writes several beautiful, fantasy-like texts after this, but it takes some struggling for her to accept that getting help with a text does not mean that she is stupid or the text hopeless. It takes even more time for her to discover that she can work for the achievement of quite high marks instead of being content with the lowest ones or none at all. But she gets there after nearly three years of intensive work.

First analysis of "The abyss"

The coordinates of time are plural in this narrative. Initially it has a resemblance to the former narrative, in the way that it mentions that time has gone from August to October. The acts of the narrative starts in October, but the reference to the passing time from August, in which some expected acts from Julia have not taken place, makes this period of time in the narrative empty. To set things in motion, the teacher "one day" talks directly to Julia to confront her with the lack of action. Other time markers are "for a while," "lately," "by night," "during next week," "a week later," "a short while," "the following day," "at night," "during the day," and so on, until the story ends by the marker "after nearly three years."

The space markers in the text might seem to be mentioned less frequent, but they are of great importance for the understanding of the axiological meanings of the narrative. The attention of the reader is initially drawn to the fact that this is a class in "General Studies," as opposed to the first narrative, which took place in vocational training. There is no specific meaning attached to this, apart from the fact that the teacher follows the students for three years, not one or two, at the most, as in vocational training.

Other space markers are "the classroom," "on the way out of the classroom," "at home," and "in the conference room." These markers define "place" as the meaning of the concept of space. But there is another space which is of utmost importance, and this space is constructed by the texts that Julia writes.

In the beginning of the semester of the first year, the timespace in Julia's texts were empty. This is true at least for the texts she was supposed to have handed in at school. But when she is given freedom to write what she wants and hand it in, the space is the same (the text). But time is given a double, or rather a *floating* meaning: The night, when she writes the texts, and the day, when she is handing them over to the teacher/reader. The nightly texts are suddenly brought into daylight. This *movement of time (night –day) in space (the text)* reveals another space, which is part one of the core event of this narrative.

This space is revealed when Julia starts giving the teacher access to her nightly activity (the writing of texts the way she wants or needs to do it), and it is called *the abyss* in the narrative.

The abyss is not a place, nor is it time. However, in this narrative the abyss is first described as a "space" in language, because it is revealed linguistically:

"The story is about a person who is awake at night, in a dark mood, and fantasizes about entering another world or dimension. This narrated person inflicts pain by cutting the body with a sharp blade. The blood, and the pain from the blade, gives a dark satisfaction for a short while.
[…]
Before I can decide what to do with the text, she hands me another one. […] This new text is even darker than the former. It's almost suicidal, like she is standing at the edge of an abyss, deciding if she wants to let herself fall in or not."

There is a double language disclosed in this excerpt. It is the language of the narrative, and this language refers to the linguistic description of nightly activity in Julia's stories. The abyss is a construction the teacher makes, when she is reading Julia's texts. She *imagines* the "I"-person in Julia's stories as a person in great danger, and the metaphor of an abyss is what she finds to be most suitable. This metaphor is actually not an expression of the reality of the "I"-person, and not for Julia, but for the teacher's emotions in the meeting with Julia's stories. The teacher is the one who is afraid of falling, into a darkness she will not be able to come out of.

The second time the abyss is mentioned, it is not within, but *beneath* the language: *"The abyss is there, lying underneath her calm and simple words."* The teacher recognizes the space of darkness from the texts written at night, in this daytime conversation. But what can be underneath the language? In a narrative, nothing is "underneath," except from the thoughts and feelings of the reader, built on the language of the text. In a conversation, one could in addition to the words, talk about body language, or the tone of voice, the intonation of the words, which gives the conversation partner some clues to how the words of the other can be interpreted, to help her form the best response. But nothing of this kind is to be found in the narrative where the abyss is mentioned. This means that the teacher is mixing her interpretation of the space of Julia's texts with the space of Julia's life. When Julia tells about the reasons why she usually writes at night, in form of an overwhelmingly difficult life story, this could be an appropriate mix. But Julia denies that the "I"-person is identical to herself, which means that the teacher is out of touch with her student's reality. This is part two of the

core event. And the teacher is dangerously close to crossing a border between Julia's texts and Julia's life a second time, when she suggests that Julia should see a psychologist. Julia's response is to the point, with her protest: "I'm not crazy!" The student understands what the teacher does not grasp; that her texts and her life do not fully correspond, they are different entities with different realities. By her over-identification with what she thinks is Julia's life, the teacher is on the verge of using her power to define her student's life, and thus force her own conception of reality over on her student. This conception of reality has as its consequence that there might be a need for professional help, possibly followed by a diagnosis.

Thus, the *core event*, or peak of tension, in this narrative is a twofold movement. The first movement brings the texts from the darkness of the night at home into the bright daylight of the classroom. The second movement is when Julia and the teacher sit down to talk, and their conversation reveals that Julia is not the victim of a serious death wish, but a strong young woman with good, evocative writing skills.

Apparently there is a change in Julia's view of herself in this narrative. In the beginning, she is not handing in the answers to the assignments given by the teacher. Actually, she has been able to stay almost invisible to the teacher for a long period of time. She is living in the margins of student conduct, and this is coloring the teacher's view on her when she starts handing in the texts. The teacher is afraid that her student is going to lose in the race for final marks.

The first sign of the teacher's worry is when she confronts Julia with the consequences of not answering the assignments. The next sign is when she reads Julia's texts and the worry changes from lack of final marks to Julia's life and an eventual early death. This is a chronotopical shift. The time limit of the marks is a couple of months that is left of the first semester. The space connected to this time limit is the class of Norwegian language and literature, located physically in the classroom. The space regarding Julia's life is first within the texts she writes, but is changed in the teacher's perception to be Julia's lived experience. The time limit connected to this space could be the ultimate and final abruption of Julia's life in form of a suicide.

Seen from Julia's point of view, the chronotopic experience is different. The chronotope of the marks is the same for both of them, but this is the only chronotope for Julia. She is a confident writer, with personal and creative resources and good writing skills. That she needs advice to make her texts better, is first an annoyance to her. But then she is captured by her own writing, based on the fact that she can develop her abilities to communicate through her writing. In her view, she does what they have agreed on, and it is obvious to her that the texts can be used as a basis for evaluation and final marks.

This is why she is willing to take the risk of inviting the teacher into her textual world. That the teacher misunderstands the texts is not Julia's problem. She has confidence in her writing, and she is willing to put trust in a future relationship to the teacher. It is possible that this trust is partly based on the fact that the teacher is showing no signs of rejection or other kinds of negative response to her blunt remark about the boring assignments.

What appeared to be a change in Julia's view of herself is still a solid interpretation, when it comes to her ability to get final marks. But the change in the teacher is even deeper, because she is the one who learns, by trying and failing, that not everything is what it appears to be at first glance. The first interpretation of Julia is proven wrong, when the student reveals what she is and what she is not. In the end, the teacher has to learn to do the same as Julia: to trust the relationship. It seems that this new way of communicating works for both of them, when Julia finally ends her education with high marks.

Narrative 3: Loopholes

One year I get the opportunity to teach Norwegian language and literature in a vocational class that builds houses. I suggest for the students that we should have some of the lessons on the construction site. First they think it's an odd idea, and some say they will not have academic subjects mixed into what they believe is the freedom of the construction site. But as we talk about it, the idea grows on them, and finally they are quite enthusiastic about it. The vocational teachers has an influence on their engagement, I guess, because they are really surprised and excited about the fact that an academic (and female) teacher is willing to come out in the cold and "risk becoming dirty," as they put it.

I decide to concentrate the lessons on the construction site on the curricular theme "instruction." But instead of me instructing them, which I could not do out there, the students

are going to learn and practice being an instructor for me, in how to build a house. Since I also want them to be prepared for what is going to take place, we have some lessons in the classroom, learning tools for oral instruction. The word 'tools' makes good sense to them. But the educational literature in Norwegian language for vocational classes is poor on relevant 'tools.' So instead I turn to classical rhetoric texts. First I tell the story of how, why and where rhetoric practices was invented, and then I turn to an explanation on how it can be useful for us today. We examine and discuss the concepts of *inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria* and *actio*[14]. They try it out in the classroom in small groups, and they are given time to develop their own instruction based on adjusted forms of these principles as we set a date for the real instruction.

As I arrive at the construction site, the students look up from their work to say hello. "Who's going to be the first?" I ask, smiling at them. It's a fresh and beautiful October morning, and I am excited to be there and curious about where this will lead. "You can come with me," one guy says quickly. I follow him up a ladder, and we sit down at the edge of what's going to be the attic in the house. I'm not sure I want to look down, so I decide to look at my student instead. "Now I am going to teach you how this nail gun works," he tells me. He explains how I am supposed to hold the gun to make sure it does not shoot in the wrong direction. He also tells me about the benefits of working with a nail gun instead of hammer and nails. He is very thorough. I notice that he looks me into the eyes to make sure I follow. I nod now and then, and says "right!" and "oh yes!" to let him know that I understand what he says. My mind is a little absent, though, because I am getting nervous from all the other nail guns being used around me. I tell him this, and ask if this is not a little dangerous as well? He smiles at me. "Of course we need to know all the time where the others are. But every morning the base coordinates the work, so that everyone knows what to do and where they should be. That is insurance for not missing the nail point and hitting a classmate instead. But there can be accidents, of course." A little reassured I carefully let my feet hang down across the edge of the attic.

---

[14] Inventio: the art of asking questions outside conventions/dispisito: to reflect on and establish a good structure of what you want to say/elocutio: what can create fantasy and emotions in the audience, based on their own sensory experience?/memoria: how can you create a picture in your mind that helps you keep what you want to say fresh?/actio: to use your voice, your eyes, your body and the subject matter in a personal way, that makes people believe in what you say and move them into action. Based on Aksnes, L.M & Time, S. (1996): *Med andre ord*. Oslo: Samlaget

"Lunch break!" The vocational teacher shouts out loud. "Wait a minute," says my instructor. "You need to try the nail gun yourself, to make sure you are able to use it." I grab the gun. It feels heavy and cold in my hand. I point it towards the place he shows me. I feel the backlash in my arm after having pulled the trigger, and now it is from my gun we can hear the soft "poff" followed by a bang. I feel proud, and smile to him. He smiles back. "You see? It's not hard; you just need some practice. Are you sure you've got it all by now?" he asks. "Absolutely, I had a very good instructor," I reply.

During the day half of the guys have had their instruction. It's going even better than I imagined, and most of them are very well prepared. I am careful not to interrupt their work, and let the instructions be as naturally integrated in their working schedule as possible. They seem to be eager to perform their instruction, even if they are nervous, and I am rather touched by their confidence and pride when they master this inverted situation.

But one guy seems to hide a little every time I get close. I let him do that, hoping that his confidence will grow as he listens to the others. During the second day I understand that it's not going to happen. I need to talk to him, and turns around to find him. But he's gone. I tell the vocational teacher that Jon also needs to perform his instruction. He tells me that Jon is quite shy. May be it would be better if he could talk the instruction over with me one-to-one, and then perform it with just him and me present, he suggests. I say sure, no problem at all. The teacher promises to find Jon and tell him this.

After lunch I spot a dark eye looking at me through an opening in the house construction. It's definitely Jon. I move towards him, and this time he waits for me. "Do you want us to go somewhere to talk?" I ask him quietly. He nods, and leads the way. He stops out of sight of the others. We sit down, and I tell him again of the principles of instruction, and the rhetoric tools he can use if he likes. He asks a few relevant questions, and seems pleased with the answers. "Can I prepare myself for one hour, and then you can come back here for the instruction?" he asks. "That's perfect," I tell him, and we part.

One hour later I turn up at the same place. Jon is there, pale and trembling. He has a written note with him. "Can I use this to be sure I don't forget anything?" he asks. "Do what's necessary for you, but remember that this is not a test or an exam," I say. "You are the expert here. The point is that you are going to teach me something I do not know from before." He

looks more relieved, but still anxious. "Let's go over here," he says, and I follow him. He starts the instruction by telling me the history of a special sawing machine, and how it has been improved over the years, up to the standard type in use at the time being. I'm impressed. Unlike the others, he has not planned to make this easy for himself. The whole presentation and instruction lasts for almost twenty minutes, and I get so captured by what he is telling and the way he does it I forget my role as a teacher and starts asking questions out of pure interest. This is a person that both knows and loves what he is doing out on the construction site, but hardly ever says a word in the classroom. Now he is so into the subject matter that he seems to have forgotten the situation himself. His eyes have an intense glance, and the trembling is gone. It's like we've found a loophole in existence, a place where we're the only existing persons, where time is suddenly suspended, and the borders between him and me are fading.

Suddenly he looks up at me. "Do you have any more questions?" he asks. "If not, I'm done." I just shake my head. "You know, I have almost never spoken in class before," he admits, as if he's amazed by his own performance. "But now you did speak, and very well indeed," I tell him. "So I passed?" he asks. I smile. "As I told you, this was not a test, but if it had been, then yes, you would have passed and much more than that." He looks pleased, almost happy. "Ok, bye then," he says. "Bye, Jon, and thank you." He looks a little perplexed at me, and then he nods and goes on with his work. I leave him, grateful that there are no others to give me instructions that day. I need to go home, and reflect upon what just happened.

First analysis of "Loopholes"

This narrative opens with an unspecific time coordinate: "One year," which indicates that it is one year in the middle of several years of teaching. At the same time it marks an unusual year, given that this particular year is pointed out and allowed to be a part of nearly a handful of narratives about significant events. And indeed it is a special year, with an academic subject matter and classical rhetoric praxis on a site for house building. The first narrative of this collection, "Neither here nor there," is also from vocational school. The project in this later narrative could be interpreted as an experiment designed to make a change in how the academic subjects are taught based on the experience from the previous class. The aim would be to connect the academic subjects more to the practical training, but also to give the students another experience of themselves as academic learners.

With the next time coordinates we are closer to the action. The few sentences in the opening paragraph that starts with "First they think it is an odd idea" and ends with "finally they are quite enthusiastic," suggests a period of tension, disagreement, a lot of discussions, before both the students and the vocational teachers "surprised and excited" decide to give it a try.

The training in the classroom, with a loop back in the history of rhetoric theory and practice, is a narrative within the narrative, or a prelude to the main events. At the construction site, on a "fresh and beautiful October morning," the teacher arrives in an excited mood. The coordinates of time are "*now* I am going to teach you how this nail gun works," "I nod *now and then*," "need to know *all the time* where the others are," "*every morning* the base coordinates the work," "*lunch break*," "wait *a minute*," "*now* it is from my gun," "sure you've got it all *by now*?" These time coordinates mark the first event.

The space coordinates in the prelude are "vocational class that builds houses" and "classroom." But other space markers point to another space, professionally and physically familiar to the vocational teachers and the students, but an experience yet to come for the teacher. This space, the construction site, is "cold" and "dirty," obviously not a usual place for academic teachers and it is typically a men's world.

In the first event, the space coordinates are not only the construction site, but inside a house under construction, in an open attic, with a view directly down to the first floor of the house. In this timespace, the teacher shows evidence of insecurity, even a bodily fear both of falling down, and being hit by a nail gun. The student's confidence is in sharp contrast, and underscores exactly what the teacher wanted to attain: an inversion of the power of knowledge. The student is on top of the situation, the teacher is not. The students' pride when they can show her their skills in house-building, and even master the instruction part, might alter their relationship and the students' connection to the subject.

It is possible to interpret this part of the narrative as a nice and compelling story. But underneath this, another story becomes visible. The seemingly inverted relation between the teacher and the students is sort of a game, or a play. The students' roles are instructed by means of rhetoric tools, and the teacher is clearly in possession of those tools herself. By them she manages to convince them that her idea is good, which it actually might be. But the inverted power situation on the construction site is there only on the surface. The teacher is

the director of this experiment, and thus the real power is in her hands. Her power would have been complete, had she decided to give marks for the students' performances. She is not doing that, and this detail prevents the whole project from being totally instrumentalistic.

There is one student, though, who apparently is not playing along with the manuscript he is given. Jon manages to slip away for almost two days. The first time coordinate to mark a new turn in the narrative is "*During the day,* one guy seems to hide every time I get close." The tension of the narrative builds further up by the next time markers: "*After lunch* I spot a dark eye looking at me through an opening in the house construction," "*This time* he waits for me," "prepare myself for *one hour,* and *then* you can come back here?" Jon is taking the directing in his own hands. Earlier his vocational teacher has suggested this, and the main teacher character of this narrative is confident enough to immediately answer "sure, no problem."

Jon has almost never spoken in class, and he is not willing to talk inside the house construction, but finds a safe place for himself and the teacher out of the sight of the others. This space is only marked with "here" in the narrative. When Jon starts his instruction, a second narrative within the narrative is revealed. This is the narrative which takes the teacher by surprise, where the inverted power situation becomes real. Jon clearly has the power of rhetoric communication almost as a natural gift, which surprises him as well as the teacher. Jon is the strong and confident narrator of the development of the sawing machine, but also of his own love, knowledge and skills of the work he is doing: "*he seems to have forgotten the situation himself. His eyes have an intense glance, and the trembling is gone.*"

The teacher is taken aback by the whole situation to the degree that she "forget(s) her role as a teacher." This is the *core event* of the whole narrative, and the situation is literally and metaphorically completely on the outside of the main space that is created by the rest of the narrative:

"*It's like we've found a loophole in existence, a place where we're the only existing persons, where time is suddenly suspended, and the borders between him and me are fading.*"

In this quote time and space have other characteristics than in the rest of the narrative. Space is "a loophole in existence," and time is "suspended." What does this mean? A loophole in existence could be interpreted as a hidden door that suddenly opens up, to let them out into

another dimension – not unlike what happened to the children in C. S. Lewis' tales of "Narnia." But that is clearly a fiction, and although this narrative also can be called fiction, it is still a realistic one, not fantasy literature. A key to the understanding of this lies in the even more obscure concept of suspended time. Chronologically, it is not suspended. The clock is ticking, which is marked by the length of Jon's lecture: twenty minutes. But in the *teacher's experience,* time is no longer "working," she has lost the feeling of it. We may all know this feeling from other situations. We loose feeling of time and space, because we are swept away from ourselves into what can be called another dimension, which actually means that something is so emotionally gripping that we seem to forget everything else. Our focus is wholeheartedly on whatever it is that sweeps us away.

This is the case in this situation as well. The question is only what is creating such a strong feeling of being swept away. Jon is apparently having the same experience as the teacher, because he "suddenly looks up," and starts asking questions about his performance. Is it his performance that creates it? It could be, but that is only part of the explanation. He is not left alone with his speech, because the teacher is "asking questions out of pure interest." What is created here, by these two persons, is a completely different space, which is not a site or a place. *It is the space of the relation between them, and the experience of time is lost because of the intensity of this direct personal meeting.*

The teacher is so surprised and overwhelmed that she needs to go straight home "to reflect" on what happened. One could claim that the new situation for both of them, with academic lessons on the construction site, is what makes this event possible. One could even say that this event turns an empty possibility into an actuality. The teacher's choices contribute in making this possible, but the one with the more conscious choices is Jon. This event, which shakes both the ontology and the epistemology of the narrative, actually happens in spite of the teacher's efforts to create something new, not because of it. The ontology is shaken because the picture of what an educational situation is and can be is completely altered. The epistemology is shaken because the methods and didactical efforts is not what create knowledge, and the knowledge created has nothing whatsoever to do with the curricular theme "instruction." The real learning takes place in the relation in the core event, and what is learned is what a relation is and how it can change a person's life.

Narrative 4: Yonder

Amina is a refugee who has been in Norway for three years. She has trouble learning the Norwegian language. Therefore she is placed in a language group I have with several other refugees from different countries, some hours a week in general studies. There are both boys and girls in the class, and this causes Amina some embarrassment. Muslim girls should not have too close contact with boys, her family says. She is not wearing a hijab in the beginning, but after a while she turns up with a beautiful black one with small pearls embroidered along the edges. She is very shy and quiet in class.

Amina has some physical problems, but no one seems to be able to find out what causes them or what they actually are about. She is at the doctor's and to hospital several times, with no result. But she has severe pain in her neck now and then, and she does not want to be a part of physical exercise classes. Some teachers take this to be part of the "Muslim female embarrassment". They decide that they are not going to care about her 'so-called' pain, especially since she seems to be quite fit some days. The word starts to go around among the teachers that she is faking it, to get out of the embarrassing physical exercise in an easier way.

One day I give the language group an assignment. They are going to try writing a small essay. There is a big discussion about what topic to choose. "The only thing I decide in this is that the main part of the essay should be about your first time in Norway or about your transition to this school," I say.

Amina is writing a lot. When I come over to her place, I see that she is not writing in Norwegian. She smiles at me. "I will translate it afterwards," she tells me in a low voice. "I just need to sort out my thoughts in my native language first." "Fine," I whisper.

When the essays are handed in, I immediately see that Amina's story is special. Apparently she has started her story describing the time when she and her family, together with several hundred of others, ran from their homes during war. She obviously got so captured by writing this, that the part about actually being in Norway has got very little space.

Her story makes me feel sick. Her family ran away very hastily, at night. The whole village was set on fire by bombs, and there was no time to bring anything but blankets and the clothes they were wearing. To get to a safe place, they had to pass another village, and then go up into

a mountain area to cross the border on the other side. When they were passing the neighboring village, they found a carriage on the side of the road. They took it with them, to carry Amina's grandmother in. She had bad legs, and was slowing the group down. They managed to get passed the village safely, but as they started ascending up the mountain path; they were put under heavy shooting and bombing. Amina ran beside the carriage, to watch out for her grandmother. They all tried to run as fast as they could, to get to a cave nearby in order to hide during the day. Amina had a scarf around her neck, and suddenly it was caught in the wheel of the carriage. She fell, and was dragged several meters before someone came to her rescue. "I was sure I was going to die," Amina writes, "but I survived. But my grandmother didn't make it."

I call Amina in to the meeting room to talk with her. "I feel so sad about what you tell in your story," I say. "You must have been terribly afraid. Have you ever told this story to anyone? Did you tell the doctors?" She looks at me. Her eyes remind me of an old woman with a lot of painful experience. "No," she whispers. "Why not?" "Nobody asked," she says. We sit there for a long time, talking quietly about her situation in her homeland before the war, during the war, and now in Norway. She is relaxed and open. I can see that she feels safe with me.

Later I learn that Amina has told about her story to her doctor, and she will get adequate help with the traumas. She has been close to four years in Norway when somebody finally gives her some relief. From that little conversation of ours grew a childish faith in me as a teacher and a grown up woman, and this faith was enough to make her do things differently.

But not for long. It's decided that next year I will be given other assignments and responsibilities. The group is given a male teacher. When I tell this to Amina, she is shocked. The few weeks that are left of the school year, she is dark-eyed and serious. After the summer holiday, she is given the assignment to write an essay by her new teacher. The essay is supposed to be about the transition from first to second year of Upper Secondary School. Her teacher wants me to read it. Amina has written all her essay about the language class the former year, and she is so sad to have lost a safe haven in her life. It is painful reading, and I feel very insecure of how this set-back will influence her further learning process.

First analysis of "Yonder"

In this narrative, there are a lot of time coordinates. What is very interesting, is that time seems to be on different levels, which simultaneously mark different spaces in the student's life. In the first five paragraphs, time is mostly in the "now," but with references to passed time, like "been in Norway *three years*," "not hijab *in the beginning*," "after a while," "to doctor and hospital *several times*," "severe pain *now and then*." What can be called the "real now" starts with "*one day* I give the students and assignment." This marks the first turn in the narrative, building up expectancies of something new to happen. The narrative structure continues along this timeline for a while, marked by the words "when I come over to her," which implies that the teacher is moving around in the space of the classroom.

The whispering conversation between the teacher and Amina seems to be of such an everyday nature, that it could go unnoticed, had it not been for what it points forward to. Amina writes her story in her mother tongue, but she is eager to tell the teacher that she will translate it "afterwards." When the teacher reads her story, it is mostly about what happened during the flight from Amina's family's village during war, and it is clear, the way she writes it, that she just had to use her first language to tell this story. She writes for herself in the first place, but with the intention to let another person into her story some days later. Contrary to the narrative about Julia, the teacher is now correct in her belief that Amina's story is directly related to her life experience.

Amina's text marks the *core event* in the narrative. The time and space of the narrative become charged when Amina's text is brought into the story. The time markers in her story are plural and quite different from the others in the main narrative. She uses words like "hastily," "at night," "no time to bring anything," "grandmother slowing down the group," "run as fast as they could," "hide during the day," "suddenly caught in heavy shooting." These are not time markers from an everyday assignment in Norwegian schools, at least not when it is based on personal experience. But given the opportunity, there could be an overwhelming amount of them. Amina's story ends with the ultimate time markers: "I was sure I was going *to die*." And the last one, which is hidden in the language: "My grandmother didn't make it." Death is the end of time, for the grandmother in reality, for Amina an imagined certainty, which she carries within her body several years later. This embodied certainty of her own death could be a large part of the coming and going "severe pain in her

neck," which with the almost symbolic *place* where the pain is located in her body, also ties her imagined death to her grandmother's real passing out of time. All this is totally differently interpreted within the school community, which tries to connect Amina's personal experience to a certain notion of what Muslim women are like.

The next passage in the narrative, when the teacher sits down with Amina, points directly to this connection with Amina, her grandmother and death. The time markers are hidden, but present: "her eyes remind me of an old woman." Amina is approximately sixteen years old, yet her eyes tell another age.

There is only one small part of this narrative that tells about an evaluation, or what could be called axiological choice: *"We sit there for a long time, talking quietly about her situation in her homeland before the war, during the war, and now in Norway. She is relaxed and open. I can see that she feels safe with me."* The choice of the teacher, to spend time, quietly, with Amina, to give her space to talk about her personal story, marks the change in the narrative. The change is a consequence of the core event. The axiological choice Amina does is that of trusting the teacher's willingness and capacity to listen to her story, but also to carry it together with her in a way that does not undermine the dignity of either of them.

The adult woman and the very young and at the same time very old woman have a meeting that touch them in an existential way. This meeting changes Amina's life to the extent that she opens up to others, gets help and probably can feel safer in the present, not being haunted by fatal memories all the time. This particular meeting carries in it the *core chronotope*. This chronotope is not only the meeting between two persons, but also the meeting of past, present and future, within a certain space. At first glance, the space is the room they sit in. Analyzing further, one could say that there is another space that emerges between the two women, a relational space, with calm and quiet listening and talking. In this relational space, time is not chronological, but the merging of past, present and future. Not as memories and future hopes, but as a living, embodied reality in that moment, for both of them. Amina is the one with first-hand experience, but by opening up for the teacher to read her text and listen to her story, she invites the teacher to become a part of this embodied, chronotopic reality.

There are other space markers in the narrative that need attention as well. There is the group of students with Norwegian as second language, and the room they use. For Amina, this

physical room is not neutral. It is a space of conflict, with the requirements of the school, and the regulations of female conduct in social space expected from her parents. The conflict thickens outside the room, when she withdraws from physical exercise and it is interpreted as "Muslim female embarrassment." Another way of interpreting this, which is not about typical features of one or the other culture, is to think of it as the meeting of two different chronotopes. The chronotope defines the motif and key topic of a story. One could say that Amina's family carries with it a story from their own life, which is embedded or situated in a certain culture at a specific time in history. When they do not like mixed-gender class, or that their daughter should exercise physically in public space, this is a part of their time-space-story. When they meet the story of Norwegian schooling, which is about gender equality, social equality, openness and transparency, this is a part of the time-space-story of the Norwegian society. Thus, there is a clash of stories. The two chronotopes do, apparently, not fit together.

Amina is in the middle of this clash. She is part of two stories simultaneously, in addition to her individual, personal story. She carries several chronotopes with her, and the different choices she makes illustrate this very clearly. She chooses to wear hijab after a while, and she writes her story in her first language, to translate it later. But she also chooses to confide in the teacher, who is part of another story with another chronotope. Amina is both "here" and "there" at the same time, it could seem. Reality is that she is neither quite "here," in the meaning of Norwegian schooling and the story connected to that, nor "there," in the meaning of her personal or family story *as it was,* when it was situated in the history and culture where it originated. Could one say that Amina right now is *yonder?*[15]

The American author Siri Hustvedt (2006) writes in her essay "Yonder" that her father once asked if she knew where yonder was. When she gave him the lexical meaning of the word ("over there"), he smiled and said, "No, yonder is between here and there" (p. 1). Hustvedt calls this a piece of linguistic magic, which she later discovered is what linguists calls "shifters," which means that the word's meaning shifts with who and where the speaker is. In other words, the meaning depends on the point of view from which the word is spoken. Consequently, there is no possibility of actually *being* yonder, that would be an oxymoron.

---

[15] The word "yonder" could be used as an adverb or as an adjective. The lexical meaning of the adverb is "over there; at some distance in that direction; in the place indicated by pointing etc," while the adjective meaning is "situated yonder" (The Concise English Dictionary 1990).

Yonder is always some place else. In Amina's case, this could mean that she is "not so much being in a place as *not* being there" (p. 2). Geographically, she is in Norway, but culturally and linguistically she is not quite "here." Culturally, linguistically and emotionally she is partly, but not quite, in her native country, but geographically she is not "there." The different stories and chronotopes she carries could rather be said to place her in a *limbo.* Hustvedt, whose family immigrated to America from Norway, defines the immigrant's place in a new society as limbo, a "place between two cultures and two languages" (p. 3).

Amina's body tells a story, which until she writes an essay about it, has not been revealed to others. One could say that she is in a limbo, a condition she would share with millions of immigrants around the globe. I argue that she, in the school situation in the narrative, is not just in a limbo, but forced into a *marginal zone,* which in Amina's case, metaphorically, has the *meaning of yonder as its main characteristic.* Seen from the Norwegian school system's point of view, she is linguistic-culturally "somewhere over there." Seen from Amina's point of view, it is the Norwegian school system, culture and language that is "over there in that direction." By giving her teacher access to her story, she invites the teacher to share this marginal condition of being "between here and there" with her. The teacher accepts, and the process of change begins. Amina is given the opportunity of "re-writing" her own story, to create herself a new chronotope, with the teacher as a safe guide on the way out of the marginal zone.

This could have been the end of the narrative, but it isn't. There is a system around these two, which they cannot influence. This system, based on other persons, has different concerns from what creates confidence for one student. There are so many time schedules and plans, the system of pairing the right teachers to the right classes to the right time, dependent of the teacher's full-time or part-time jobs. Amina's needs become invisible in the space of timing and logistics. Her fragile new chronotope breaks, she is back in the marginal zone, with the teacher (and the school) on the other side.

Second analysis: findings

The overall common trait in the narratives is that of *several chronotopes working simultaneously.* This is a trait in several complex narratives. In this study this complexity of chronotopes is found in parallel narratives and stories within stories. This complexity adds to the riches and depths of the narratives. Additionally, I have suggested that one could see a person's life, with its family background, history, and cultural setting, as a narrative with a chronotope. The way the individual person conceives and interprets this background, history and setting, with the different acts and events that have happened, is also seen as a narrative. This narrative contains the person's worldview and view of the self, and has its own chronotopes. Furthermore, I have also interpreted the Norwegian school system as a narrative.

All these types of chronotopes can work together and be fruitful to each other, or they can collide, and they can be re-created to contribute in making the person's life better. This is a finding on a meta-level, because it is precisely the chronotopes that contains and leads to understanding of the next findings. I do not discuss all the chronotopes found in first analysis as findings. Rather, I have tried to see the different chronotopes in the narratives together, and then classify them and lift them to a new level of abstraction. This movement to a new abstraction level is synonymous to identifying the ruptures in the narratives, the places where the underlying structures are revealed. These structures are what could be called the findings. They are underscored in the following text by making them headlines, which all carry the names of the main chronotopes as I have found them when all four narratives together are seen as one large narrative.

The chronotope of marginalization

This is the chronotope found in the history of schooling experienced by Jack and his class mates. It is a history full of defeats, feeling of inferiority and rejection, betrayals, vanishing hopes, and consequently of resistance to schooling based on the belief that they are not able to learn. The main motif in this narrative is that of living almost on the outside of the school system, with the notion of not being able to fit in. That creates the chronotope of marginalization.

With other reasons and backgrounds, this is also the story of the texts that Julia writes. Although they do not, according to Julia, refer directly to her life. But the history of not

handing in the assignments, and then handing in the nightly written texts, contributes to Julia being on the verge of marginalization.

Jon is different. Not only is he on the verge of marginalization for being in this class, he is on the outside of schooling altogether. He has "never spoken in class before," and he abjects from the scene until he has no other choice than to participate.

Amina has her own background and story, first written in a text, and then discovered as lived experience. She is marginalized for being a non-native speaker, for being from a "different" culture, for being traumatized without anyone discovering it and helping her, and she is marginalized in her own family for having to participate in school activities that her family does not approve of.

In the quote from Thomas Hobbes (Silverthorne, 1998) in the beginning of Part two in this study, the danger and tension of being in this nowhere land is perfectly described. Hobbes writes about the Commonwealth, but if that concept is switched with the school system, it would be like this: "…outside the [school system] is the empire of the passions, war, fear, poverty, nastiness, solitude, barbarity, ignorance, savagery; within the [school system] is the empire of reason, peace, security, wealth, splendour, society, good taste, the sciences and good-will." Being in the marginal zone is to be on the verge of falling outside. Being in the marginal zone is also to be infected by the disease of "passions, war, fear, nastiness…" to say it metaphorically, and the task of the school system is to bring the student over on the right side. I am of course putting this on the edge, to illustrate how serious it is to be marginalized by and in the school system, with the consequences this has on a person's conception of self. The quote from Hobbes is also brought in to illustrate that falling out of the school system is also to fall out of society, with the "barbarity" and "savagery" that inevitably follows.

The chronotope of change

The narrativity of a person's life history is not stable or static. In all of the narratives, this is a common misconception, but in all of them it turns out that it is *possible to create a new life story*. There is always a new start, but it takes time and effort, and this new start of a new life story must be built on different experiences than the former story. The creation of a new life story is in the narratives always connected to what is called the core event. In the two stories from vocational training, there are two factors that contribute to make the core event take

place. The first factor is that the student who is the protagonist of the story is not willing to do exactly what is lined up. Jack is the most provocative of them, but Jon is also a protagonist, sneaking away, not quite willing to follow the mainstream. In the narrative about Julia, the possibility of creating a new story lies in the movement of her nightly written texts to letting them into daylight and inviting the teacher to read them. In Amina's case, it is also her text and the invitation to the teacher to read it that is the first step towards change.

The chronotope of embodiment

The teacher has the *sensitivity* to follow this up without reaching out for extended use of power. She is one the verge of misusing her power in these asymmetric relationships, but she manages to avoid the complete power. One example is when she misconceives Julia's texts with her life, another is when she is the director of the "play" on the construction scene, but refuses to give marks to the student's performance.

In all four narratives *the eye* is given a prominent role as a key to understand that something new is about to happen. In narrative 1 the teacher suddenly catches "a glimpse of one pair of eyes finally paying attention." In narrative 2 the teacher notices Julia's "pale face with dark rings under her eyes," as a difference to earlier in the narrative when Julia was more like a shadow in the classroom. In narrative 3 it is the dark eye of Jon "looking at me through an opening in the house construction." In narrative 4, when Amina and the teacher talks, the teacher notices that Amina's "eyes remind me of an old woman with a lot of painful experience."

The teacher also sits down with the students "with a deep sigh" when Jack utters his frustration, she is feeling sick with worry over Julia, she is nervous and tense in the beginning on the construction site, but allows herself to be swept away together with Jon, and she listens carefully and quietly to Amina, letting her story become a part of her own embodied experiences.

This sensitivity is some sort of *embodied awareness, a way of listening to more than the words being said.* The teacher decides to be *guided by her intuition and her emotions* into staying with the student as a fellow human being, in addition to her knowledge and skills in the subject matter. She is still an adult person; it has nothing to do with being a pal or a friend

or a comrade. I will claim, and bring this up again in the discussion, that intuition and emotions are not about irrationality either.

The chronotope of relation

In these narratives it is the students who take the initiative to form a relationship. They might not be aware that this is what they are doing, but a relation is what it becomes. Jack and Julia are those who have the most to lose, because of their quite provocative remarks. Jon could easily have been forgotten, but when the teacher agrees to treat him differently, he surprisingly offers a lot more to tie a relational bond with the teacher. Amina decides to write her dramatic and painful life story, to invite the teacher in, in spite of the fact that she was told to create her story differently.

When this happens, the teacher decides to *let go of the control and let the students take an active part in forming their learning processes* in all the narratives. She does not become passive, she is *supportive and active.* When she does that, *the students show that they are resourceful, reflective, talented, trusting and trustworthy.* This is nothing that comes over night. It *takes time, patience and hard work for both the teacher and the students.*

When the teacher becomes an active part in a different way than initially, she has made a *choice of acts,* which is always *axiological,* because she is choosing one value over the other: what is best for the student over a literal interpretation of the curriculum's word of study progression or the time schedules in school. She also "puts down her guard of didactical thinking," "shows a human face of bewilderness," "forgets her role as a teacher," but she also says "yes, sure" without thinking, when it is suggested that she should do things differently with one single student. These choices of acts, when the teacher chooses to be a *fellow human being instead of keeping up her role,* are therefore what are called the *core chronotopes,* which is the main motif of the narratives.

What is the case in the narratives is that the teacher and the students have to start from scratch to build up the trust. The main reason for change is that *both the teacher and the students have to trust something that is not yet there: a relationship that is trustworthy.* For the teacher, this is exactly what is meant by *going into the marginal zone where the student is, and staying there until the student is ready to come out.* By *being willing to take risks of becoming marginalized as a teacher, she enters the chronotopes of the students.* This *courage and*

creativity seems to be what contributes to the change. Courage, because she seems to take *autonomous decisions* which do not seem to be part of the curricula, and creativity because she needs to find other ways of doing the teaching than what is prescribed in teaching methods, didactics, curricula and official documents. Then the students reveal that there are resources also in the marginal zones, they just need support and security to bring it out. The trustworthy and fruitful relationship is not given, it has to be learned.

As a summary of this second analysis, it would be appropriate to end it with a quote from First analysis, which describes the place of the chronotope of relation in the narratives. Probably it could be called the main finding in all the narratives:

 "The ontology is shaken because the picture of what an educational situation is and can be is completely altered. The epistemology is shaken because the methods and didactical efforts is not what create knowledge, and the knowledge created has nothing whatsoever to do with the curricular theme ["instruction."] The real learning takes place in the relation in the core event, and what is learned is what a relation is and how it can change a person's life."

In this second analysis of all the narratives seen together, the findings are the chronotopes of marginalization, of change, of embodiment, and of the relation.
In the next chapter I will bring in the policy document and let the findings and the document shed light on each other. The main topic I outlined in the Government's white paper is what the aims of education are. The discussion will relate these aims as they appear in the documents to what they are analyzed to be in the narratives. The findings will also be discussed in the light of theory, as it appears in the theory chapter.

Discussion

The initial research question of this study was *"Narratives from upper secondary school: How does potential for learning and new hope emerge in decisive events where teacher and at-risk students are involved?"* The additional question was *How can this study open up for a wider perspective on educational aims?* My intention is to find some answers to these questions in the following discussion.

The structure in this chapter is built on the four different chronotopes identified in Second analysis. The chronotopes of marginalization, embodiment, change and relation will be discussed in relation to the Government's white paper and to Bakhtin's philosophy investigated and described in the theory chapter.

The chronotope of marginalization

If we view the Government's white paper as a narrative about the educational situation related to the Norwegian society, the main lines in the text becomes clear. A good society is described in the white paper as being with few class distinctions, with reduced inequity and without poverty and other forms of marginalization. Thus the chronotope of marginalization is one of the main traits in this paper as well as in the other narratives investigated in this study. The time coordinates of marginalization in the white paper is "late (language learning)." The space is "society," "social class," and "education." The chronotope of marginalization in the white paper thus has as its motif "low social class is reproduced unless intervention takes place." The movement in this chronotope is that of (social) climbing.

In society, to be marginalized means, according to the paper, to be in lower social classes, even a victim of poverty. In addition, it means to have low basic literacy skills and a level of knowledge that is not in accordance to the definition in the Government's paper. As a consequence, these marginalization factors lead to a diminished ability to participate actively in a democratic society, reduced capacity to follow up on the increasing demands at work, which again will produce a large number of the population on disability pension – which will create heavy pressure on society's economic balance.

To be marginalized in the school system, means, again according to the white paper, to come from a family that is already socially marginalized. This situation for a child or an adolescent

means that education is so demanding that they can expect little or no educational support from their family. Thus, the educational system needs to intervene to meet the requirements the Government has set up for the society they want.

By analysing the four narratives in this study, I find that the reasons for marginalization are somewhat different, and thus the action provided also differs. The students in the narratives are on the verge of marginalization. They are in the marginal zone, by being close to failing to meet the requirements from the school system, and thus dropping out. For the time being, they are at-risk, but on the inside of the system. There are no contradictions to the white paper in this analysis.

But the feeling of being in the wrong place, according to what is regarded in society and school as the better place to be, is very strong. This is particularly clear in narrative 1 with Jack and his friends. They clearly state that their "stupidity" make them unfit for theoretical learning, and that this condition make them almost second class members of the educational system. Not necessarily because of their family background or for being late language learners, but rather because there is very little that connects them as persons to what is going on and is expected from them at school, which is illustrated in narrative 2 with Julia, who claim that the assignments given are so out of touch with her life that she does not bother to answer them. There is no experience of school as a community where they should learn what is necessary to participate in society and reach personal goals. Moreover, there is definitely no experience of education as an aim in itself and not just an instrument for reaching other goals. The overall feeling of being quite alone in the school system; with very little support, seems to be strong. Some of them, like Jack and his class, even find that the system; or the professionals in the system; contribute to the traumatizing process of schooling. There are of course other factors that could be contributing to this feeling of being alone and traumatized, which are not mentioned in the narratives. However, the determinism could to some extent be said to exist within the school system itself, and there is reason to doubt that extensive language learning would be the only adequate measure to mend that for students like those in the narratives. The notion of already having lost is strong for the students in the narratives. This feeling could have other roots than loosing in the educational system, but how they see themselves *as learners* is based on having lost already. But the students find their own ways of survival. There is resistance, avoidance, and different ways of making themselves invisible.

Thus, to be marginalized, or in the marginal zone, in the school system, is to be in a state of crisis. This crisis is educational, social, and personal.

Jack is the one who gives a clear definition of what makes him and his classmates resist and avoid participation in the school work the teacher initiates. With his and the other's narrative of their previous school experience it cannot be tempting to risk situations that could add to their feeling of being victimized; and make the weight of own failure even heavier. The only student who is eager to do what she is asked to do is Amina, with only three years of schooling in Norway. She still writes her essay the way that is important for her at the moment, and thus does what is required, but in her own way. But within a year, she learns that there are factors in the school system that makes it difficult to follow up on her development. Needless to say, this causes tremendous disappointment, insecurity and grief in her. These examples show that the crisis of marginalization is not only reproduced, emerging, or existing, in the school system; it can also be produced there. Rather than asking for reasons or causes outside school, the more important question is thus if there is a way out of this spiral. The white paper express that "future efforts to level out social differences should focus attention on factors within the education system, which can promote better learning for everyone, rather than on external circumstances which the educational system can do little about" (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2007, p. 15). The Government presents early intervention in language development as one of the keys to reduce social inequality. In this study, I suggest a somewhat different and more holistic change which also alters the aims of education. In the following, this alternative will be discussed.

The chronotope of change

What could be done when the crisis is a fact, and how can it be prevented? In the white paper, the answer to both questions is called early intervention. The priority arena for intervention is primary school, if the danger of marginalization is not discovered earlier, for example in children's health centres or in kindergarten. What should be discovered is late language learning, because it is seen as the key factor in helping a child develop into an active participant in a democratic society, rather than becoming a socio-economic burden to the same society. If the crisis is discovered later, intervention in language learning and other literacy areas should be provided based on the view of lifelong learning. The coordinates of

the chronotope of change in this paper is therefore "lifelong" and "early" as time, and "educational system" and "society" as space.

It is not difficult to agree on the importance of literacy in basic areas as part of the individual's ability to attain more knowledge and to participate in society. Moreover, it is clear that this white paper expresses a need for change in education as an instrument for change in society. The narratives and analyses in this study points to a broader kind of change. There is focus on, and development in, oral and written language skills in these narratives as well. But to jump to the conclusion that this is what the change is about, is premature.

First, what the students attain in the narratives is not just technical skills in writing, although two of the narratives mention what it takes to make a text good and meaningful to a reader. Also in the narrative from the construction site there is an initial focus on oral skills, based on rhetoric structures in language. Secondly, what the deeper change is about is how the students view themselves and their ability to learn. Their oral and written performances are the beginning of a new life story, not just skills. In these new life stories the view of the past is changed in the present, opening up the future in a new way. What is the cause of the change? I would claim that the skills being learned come second. The main cause of change seems to be that *the students are allowed to be present in school as whole persons, with their history and their vulnerability*, but also that *they are given time* to develop what they have of resources and talents and thus *actively and responsible contribute in the creation of a new "now" and a possible new future*. In other words, the students' ontology is taken into account; which in Bakhtinian words means "a person's worldview and fate" (M.M. Bakhtin, 2006b, p. 293).

But is it not a cliché to talk about "whole persons"? The students in these narratives are of course present in the educational situations as whole persons, but the main thing is how they experience their own presence, and how their presence is being perceived by others. If the teacher views the students as representatives of a group she is going to provide with skills, the lack of skills is what she sees in the students. If she instead sees her task as turning the "empty possibilities in a moment into actuality" (Bakhtin, 1999), the situation will be different. What does this mean in concrete situations? The "empty possibility" in the described educational situations means that the possibility of change is always present. It is up to the persons in an actual situation to realize this possibility, and to make it an actuality - an experienced reality. This is part of what Bakhtin calls the responsible consciousness; to be aware of, and realize,

the potential in the moment: "[t]he moment constituted by the performance of thoughts, feelings, words, practical deeds is an actively answerable attitude that I myself assume" (Bakhtin, 1999, p. 37).

The premise that lies behind this actualization is the realization of *the need for or dependency of the other, because together they can make each other's lives more complete* (Bakhtin, 1999, p. 42). The students are dependent on the teacher, for developing knowledge and for getting good grades. The teacher is also dependent on the students, to be able to realize the fullness of her task as an educator. But beyond the roles of being a teacher and a student, lies the realization and actualization of both teacher and student as humans. A life story is never merely about roles or positions, but about the perception of the self in different life situations. When Bakhtin says that a person's worldview and fate is at stake in the dialogue of life, and even that "he invests his entire self in discourse"(M.M. Bakhtin, 2006b, p. 293), it will not only count for the student in an educational situation. It is also about the teacher. This is the core of dependency on the other. I argue that both the vulnerability *and* the possibilities that lie in this dependency, is the reason why Bakhtin calls an act a *moral act.* The choice of act could add to the other person's vulnerability, but it could also open up and actualize the possibilities of the other. In the narratives in this study, the teacher opened up some of the possibilities for the students, but the students did the same to her. She acted initially out of what she thought, and possibly had learned, was required, sometimes with a great deal of didactic creativity. But again and again the students showed her that this was neither enough nor what was needed. But by listening to them, she gained insight into the problems and together they found the possibilities of the moment. To answer those possibilities the teacher needed to meet the students in a different way and with other sides of her personality.

What lies in the possibility of the moment, is therefore the realization of the dialogicality we are born into; "life by its very nature is dialogic" (M.M. Bakhtin, 2006b, p.293). This study shows that the teacher and the students changed from being present in the moment as the provider and those who lacks and needs, into realizing the dependency of each other. This dependency made the teacher share the marginality with the students, in two ways. She *entered* the marginal zone by listening to the pain in the students' stories, which turned her view on teaching upside down. She *became a part of* the marginal zone when she decided to act on what she learned about the students' situation and their view on themselves. This turned the situation from a determined crisis into a situation with hope. The coordinates of

time in the narratives are thus "the moment," but the moment seems to expand, there are new changes added to the first one, a lot of work to be done, and time stretches out into the unforeseeable future. Space in the chronotope of change is the physical place where teacher and student are, and it is worthwhile noticing the extended use of different rooms – classroom, construction site, outside the construction site, conference room, and meeting room. These different rooms create opportunities for different types of action, all related to the change. But the main space where change is happening is the bodies of the acting persons, because the body is the space they occupy in the world (Bakhtin, 1999).

The chronotope of embodiment

The impetus of change, metaphorically expressed in the First analysis of narrative 1 as a stone dropped into water with following waves like concentric circles, is in the same narrative Jack's provocative and provoked utterance. But there is one moment before that utterance which could easily be overlooked while reading them. That is the moment of "one pair of eyes finally paying attention." It is more than a likely interpretation that Jack has the same experience when he meets the teacher's eyes; "finally she is paying attention." What is expressed in this narrative is the experience of one pair of eyes meeting the other in a sudden, direct and expressive way. This is actually the first step toward change.

In the other narratives there are also references to eyes, always connected to the change in the situation. What happens when two persons suddenly meet the eyes of each other in a different way? The eye is one part of the body, and therefore one could say that two bodies relate to each other in a new and attentive way. The sensitivity or awareness of this moment also carries the possibility of creating a new immediate future. The new future is based on the fact that the experienced past can be changed in the moment. How can this be? Because what the teacher and the student see when eyes suddenly meet, is not just the flesh and blood, the physiology of the eye and the body of the other. The excess of seeing, as Bakhtin (1990a) calls it, means in my interpretation that *they see the potential in each other that they cannot see in themselves.* This is the basis for change; it is the first step towards activating the theoretical possibility of the moment, and it is the discovery and recognition of the above mentioned dependency on the other.

This potential can only be released in a dialogic relation. Bakhtin says that a person enters dialogue not only with his language, but "with his whole body and deeds." The words a person speaks are therefore not the whole dialogue. The dialogue is an act, performed by a body that acts (thinks, speaks, moves, does, interacts). Thus, the body is what is turned against the other in the direct meeting, and which is dependent of the other to create meaning in the acts being performed. The body that performs the act is *aimed* toward the other, which is what makes the body the space of dialogue. An educational situation thus always includes the other "*as body and deeds*" (M.M. Bakhtin, 2006b, p.293, my emphasis), and the teacher is dependent of the students, as they are of her, to create meaning in the events they share.

What is said above is the meaning of the words in Second analysis; *to listen to more than the words being said.* The actualization of the dialogicality in the narratives is to listen and see differently, because the students expect a response from the teacher on the acts they perform, whether it is words uttered or movement and motion, or silence and withdrawal. In contrast, Bakhtin mentions that a monologue, or a monologic approach, "is deaf to the other's response, does not expect it and does not acknowledge in it any *decisive* force"(M.M. Bakhtin, 2006b, p. 292-293).

The decisive force in the teacher's and students' responses in the narratives is the call for a new way of doing things. The teacher needs to be aware of what society and the Government expects her to do; which is to use her knowledge, skills and education to provide education for the students. Through listening to the students, the teacher seems to find that she needs other resources to guide her in addition to what her education has provided her with. In Second analysis these other resources are said to be intuition and emotion. The students in narrative 1, 3 and 4 tell the teacher their life stories, which are evocative because they are filled with different emotions. Jack and his classmates are disappointed, feeling inferior and displaced, and they revolt against the teacher's efforts to continue teaching without taking into account what they believe is the truth about them. Julia is apparently not interested in the teacher's efforts at all, but given a chance, she tells stories about a very self-destructive person. She claims that this person is not her, at least not "now," even though she admits that she has had emotions and dreams like the "I" in her stories earlier. Amina tells a story of war and death, and about her own fears when she was facing her own certain death. Jon does not tell his story, but the fact that he withdraws and has "never spoken in class before" tells a story of fear,

insecurity and shyness. All these emotions are deeply embedded and embodied in the way they see themselves and their minor possibilities.

To create meaning in the situations raised by these stories is to judge about what one more important response than another is. The teacher finds herself in a situation of axiological choice; the situations are not value-free. Where are these values to be found? According to Bakhtin, not in an *a priori* idea of what is good, or in a deliberation of consequences. The values are found in the fact that we are dialogic beings present in the moment. When Bakhtin argues that the "body and deeds," "worldview and fate," "entire self" is what constitutes the participation, I argue further that this includes emotions. I also claim that the values by which the teacher makes choices in the described situations are rooted in her emotions. I support what Bakhtin writes: "to live from within oneself does not mean to live for oneself, but means to be an answerable participant from within oneself, to affirm one's compellent, actual non-alibi in Being" (1999, p. 49), and he confirms that choices of acts are "emotional-volitional" (ibid). The emotions of despair, fear, disappointment and hopelessness or revolt expressed by the students, are met with the emotions of compassion, participation, care, understanding, and trust, by the teacher. All these emotions are embodied, and are shown as movement and other bodily actions and reactions: "sit down with them," "deep sigh," "sit down and talk," "the trembling is gone," etc. These emotions are what create the mutual sense of meaningfulness when the situations change in the narratives. They are also part of the intuitive sense of what should be done to realize the change.

In Julia's case, this could have gone wrong, had it not been for Julia's persistence and will to direct and interpret her own life. The example with Julia shows that the choice of acts cannot be made on purely individualistic grounds. The context, which in this case means the class situation, the marks to be given, the subject matter, even Julia's personal situation and history, must be taken into consideration. But the examples in the narratives show that there is seldom time for deliberation. Thus, the intuitive choice is made upon knowledge of the subject matter, possibly also brief considerations about curricula and the context, understanding of the situation and the persons involved, experience, and emotions, based in the dialogic relation. All these factors are different types of embodied knowledge.

The white paper has no mentioning of bodies or embodiment. There seems to be a more cognitive and analytical approach towards understanding the situations and how to solve what

seems to be the problem. Language development seems to be a cognitive skill, and how late or good this development is, defines whether the language user is in need for help or not. It is the professional help that should provide the change, and the change is to enable the individual to manage well in society.

The chronotope of relation

The crisis of marginalization is in the narratives of this study described as a crisis on a personal level. In the white paper it is described as a socio-economic problem, as well as having a restraining effect on the individual's participation in society. The white paper does not mention the humans in the educational system, other than naming them "pupil," "student," "employees," and "pre-school teachers and teachers." There is no mention of relation, which is not remarkable, because more often than not, relations are in the whole educational system usually taken for granted. Furthermore, the good relationship between teacher and student is often taken for granted; perhaps because the teacher enters the classroom with good intentions, and assume that the pupils or students do the same.

The teacher in the narratives does the same. She enters the classroom with her knowledge, her education and her toolbox of didactics. It is a deep shock to her to discover that the students are not interested, as with Jack, Julia and, in a different way; Jon. In narrative 1 she is not able to stand on her feet when the reality of the situation strikes her, and she sits down with the students with a deep sigh. She understands that another approach is needed. She reaches out a hand to the students when she asks what they, together, are going to do with the situation. Jack's utterance could be seen as a provocation or as an attack on her authority; a fist in return for the open hand, but the teacher goes beyond the first interpretation to look for other answers. As they talk, about previous schooling and what is fun, something emerges that was not there initially. They come to know each other, they speak openly, and they are present in each moment without the previous distance. They learn to write texts, to speak differently with attention on how they do it. But again, by saying this, the relation could be taken for granted. The narrative shows though, that both teacher and students are learning how to relate to each other as humans.

In narrative 2, the teacher again stumbles in a new situation. She has a growing worry about Julia and her marks, and confronts her in the classroom, on the way out. That is not a good

way to start a relationship. Through Julia's texts she feels obliged to talk one-to-one, and again it is the student who leads the way into a relation. But the few openings that the teacher gives starts something and the further openings that Julia gives makes the relation grow. They both learn to trust that they will be able to work things out if there are new misunderstandings. This is a relation, and it lasts for three years.

At the construction site the tone is easy to begin with. The deliberations have been done in the classroom, and it is obvious that there is mutual trust and a great deal of freedom between the teacher and "a guy." Jon needs time, and the teacher gives him that. She has a different confidence in herself than in the former narratives. She has a balance between distance and being close. She feels free to experiment with the subject matter, and initiates a totally new way of teaching; on the construction site. Although this method raises a lot of questions, she is so clearly on the students' safe ground that this allows new things to happen. It is possibly not the new arena that drives Jon out of his hiding, but rather the fact that the teacher openly shows her insecurity *and* her confidence in the new environment. Her role as teacher in control is undressed long before her final meeting with Jon, and her humanity is on free display. These factors opens up for Jon to throw himself into a situation that frightens him so much that he is trembling. The fact that they meet outside their roles, allows them both to be swept away. The loophole (Bakhtin, 1990b) is the door out of isolation, fear, distance, and marginalization. It is a door to change; it is the door to the relation.

With Amina in the last narrative, the whispering conversation during her writing session shows that a relation is in its beginning phases. It is definitely deepened during their conversation in the meeting room. There is a relaxed and quiet tone, in spite of the very serious themes they talk about. Amina has been in close contact with one of the ultimate time coordinates of life; death. Her body is still aching from this contact. This story illustrates that time and space of experience is never left behind. But to create a change, it needs to be brought into a relation and investigated in light of this relation. As Bakhtin says; the constituting moment of an act is thought, reflection; the linguistic or artistic expression of it (Bakhtin, 1999).

On the basis of these narratives, I argue that *potentials of learning emerge in the relation, and that how to form a good relation is part of what is learned*. The students learn how to express themselves orally and in writing, and according to the Government's white paper this would

lead the way out of marginalization. Based on narrative 1 and 3, this could be the case. Jack and his classmates seem to develop in skills, and so does Julia. Jon might have gained a new confidence in his oral skills, but the narrative is not specific on that. Amina shows ability to communicate well through her text.

But this is not the whole story. It is my claim, based on these narratives, that *what the students and the teacher learn, is how to initiate, form and develop a relationship beyond the roles of teacher and student.* The increased skills are not the single aim. The texts, oral and written, are spaces of mutual effort; teacher and students work together to make the performance of the texts better. But what is made real in this work, together with the disclosure of personal stories, is what Bakhtin calls "the dialogic nature of human life itself"(2006b, p.293). This realization is what I claim to be *another aim of education*, and I will discuss this further now.

The double educational aim

When Bakhtin claims that the condition humans live under is dialogue, it might, to some, seem obvious. The fact that we are born into a culture at a certain point in history, learn a language and thus participate in society is the underlying thought also in the Government's white paper. But in a world of developing individualization, it might still be controversial to talk about the dialogic nature of humans, and even more so, when this is regarded as more than a universal theory. By connecting the philosophy of dialogue to the philosophy of time and space, what is at stake in Bakhtin's philosophy becomes clearer. The ultimate time coordinates of human life is birth and death. The space we live in at any moment can differ, as shown in the narratives. But there is one space we are always "in," regardless of other spaces, and that is the space of the body. The body is born, and the body dies. The body also creates the viewpoint from where I see the world, my unique point of view: "I occupy a place in once-occurrent Being that is unique and never-repeatable, a place that cannot be taken by anyone else and is impenetrable for anyone else" (Bakhtin, 1999, p. 40). This is what Bakhtin calls "my non-alibi in Being" (ibid).

To universalize this and see that this goes for everybody is to make it theoretical and non-committing, Bakhtin claims, and "[t]here is nothing I can do with this theoretical proposition; it does not obligate me in any way" (p.41). It is precisely my personal uniqueness, the fact that nobody can take my place, which must be actualized "in the act, in the performed deed,

i.e., [it] is yet to be achieved" (ibid). But are not these thoughts very individualistic, and even collide with the notion of dialogue? Bakhtin does not think so, and argue that

> "I, from my unique place in Being, simply see and know another, that I do not forget him, that for me, too, he exists – that is something only I can do for him at the given moment in all of Being: that is the deed which makes his being more complete, the deed which is gainful and new, and which is possible only for me. This productive, unique deed is precisely what constitutes the moment of ought in it" (p.42)

Bakhtin writes about different types of dialogue; dialogue between texts (intertextuality), between utterances, and the concrete lines in a conversation (2006). But in the discussion of the narratives in this study, I use the ontological meaning of his concept of dialogicality. In the events in the narratives, I interpret Bakhtin's concept of ontological dialogue as the possibility of relations between the persons called teacher and student. The acts that create, or actualize, these relations are the responsible, moral acts. The reason why there, in Bakhtin's view, is no need for a theoretical moral *ought* is that the acts are regulated by the relation. It is not only the situation which demands certain acts; it is the persons in a relation *in* the specific situation. The sensitivity of the teacher in the events, mentioned in Second analysis, is built on "that for me too, he exists […] that is something only I can do for him at a given moment […] that is the deed which makes his being more complete."

From viewing themselves as fixed, individual selves the teacher and the students in the narratives move toward a new understanding: they need each other. It is risky to trust someone you don't really know, but all of them do just that. Not easily, not quietly and peacefully and harmoniously, but by jumping into it, failing and trying again, the relation is there as a space and time where change is not only possible, but a living reality. To learn basic skills is important, and that the teacher has appropriate knowledge of the subject matter is equally important. Quite often though, a good teacher-student relation is seen as one of the means to this end. I turn this upside down. I claim that to help pupils and students out of the marginal zone, to help them learn something that can contribute in making their lives good and help them manage in a rapidly changing society, there is need for a *double educational aim*. The metaphor of the Janus-face Bakhtin uses to illustrate the two aspects of an act (the one face of Janus being the one turned towards culture, the other face turned towards the lived act) could also be used to illustrate the aims of education. Knowledge and literacy is the "face," or the aim, towards culture and society, while relation as lived experience is the aim

pointing towards a good human life. Relation is not a means to an end; it is an end in itself. In other words; knowledge, skills *and* the ability to initiate, develop and maintain good relations are what I suggest as the double educational aim.

Summary of discussion

The Government's white paper defines marginality as being unable to follow up the different demands from a rapidly changing society, which results in low income or disability pension, low status or social class, and therefore not being able to participate in a democracy. As a consequence, a marginalized family will not be able to follow up their children in their education. Thus, society needs to intervene, particularly with help in the acquisition of basic skills.

This study shows that marginalization not only can be reproduced, but even produced within the school system. There seems to be an agreement between my study and the white paper on this, and that this can be the reason behind the aim in the white paper to improve education and teacher competence. But while the white paper has a concern for the socio-economic pressure that follows high drop-out rates, marginalization and disability pensions, and thus wants education to be an instrument for changing the situation, this study points to an alternative way to think about education.

An underlying critique of the white paper in this discussion is the instrumentalistic view on education. Although I appreciate the will to change the situation for marginalized children, adolescents or adults, I am critical to the political will to use education as a tool for social and economic change and benefits. With an instrumentalistic view on education, the products and results are the main evidence of success. The human beings in the system disappear. In addition, education loses its intrinsic value. I argue that instead of reducing marginalization, it will increase; because the reductive view of the human beings in the every day life in schools will cause resistance.

The alternative launched in this study is based on the view that the ability to build relationships is so important that it is not possible to disconnect it from the knowledge- and skill-aims. As a matter of fact, when the word "ability" is used, in connection with something that could be learned, it could be seen as a skill (Sidorkin, 2002). I believe this will immediately raise discussions of how it could be learned, how it can be achieved, and of

course, how it could be evaluated in an educational situation. This is a vast discussion, which I leave out of this study, because I believe it would need a lot of further investigation.

But the thought itself, that relation is that important, might seem controversial to some. I base this study on my interpretation of Bakhtin's philosophy, and it is from this point of view I argue. As I see it, relation is essential in the philosophy of time and space. Time and space are the coordinates by which we establish that something exists. It would be very difficult to imagine something existing outside of time and space. But time and space are not stable coordinates; all the different chronotopes in this study underscore this fact. The only stable coordinates are those of birth and death, but they are not "real" until the particular life is born or ended. Does the experience of instability make everything relative? The answer is yes, if we consider things and humans as isolated individuals. The answer is no, if we think that all things and humans are relational. The relation binds each human together with other humans, and to *experience that; to make it an experienced reality,* creates an unstable stability. It is only unstable if it is measured to something fixed or absolute. It is stable and strong, if it is viewed as something living, growing, flexible, floating – as flux (Holquist, 2004).

Chronotopical thinking

Bakhtin states that time and space are always simultaneous. They could be seen as coordinates by which an act is performed and perceived. An act is always taking place in a space, and it can be located in time. In the analysis of the narratives I have found that time is not always chronological. Sometimes time seems to be stretched, or suspended, and sometimes the moment contains both past and the possibility of viewing the past in a different way. A person's history is embodied, which means that past experience merge in the "now," if it is given the space to do so. This can lead to a change in how this time and space is valued, which again opens up the future in a new and richer way.

Space can be the concrete room, but the analysis shows that body can be seen as space, and the relation between two people is a form of space, and a written or oral text is also a space. A social class is a type of space, as well as the position a person holds in society; for instance to be marginalized. Space can, according to the analyses, also expand, change, and move.

The point is, that chronotopical analyses reveals that *experienced* time and space is never linear or chronological. Time and space in the narratives are rather based in events, or

moments in events. A moment in an event is a single act, and the consequences of this act spread like concentric circles in an even wider formation. This way of thinking contradicts the notion that acts, situations, happenings and events follow each other in a steady linear progression. Seen this way, time and space is something *in* the event; time and space is flexible and floating, and they are a productive force inside the events. Instead of being an *a priori* transcendental form by which we judge our experience, as Kant puts it, time and space is in the act. According to Bakhtin, the act is performed from within a responsible consciousness. As a consequence, time and space is what give us the possibility of change, because of our freedom to choose the acts we perform. This freedom is bound, not theoretically, but by our responsibility and commitment to the other in a relation. Sensitivity and awareness in the relation makes it possible to follow up when something unexpected happen; and time and space can expand towards a new future.

Chronotopical thinking follows life the way it is experienced, rather than being a form we form experience in accordance to. It represents an alternative to the thinking in the white paper, where life is seen as a linear development which, in some cases, needs intervention from outside. Related to education, chronotopical thinking could offer a different view on teaching and learning. "Building block by block" in a steady progression (with intervention), as described in the white paper, is an analytical, cognitive and individualistic way of thinking. Chronotopical thinking is based on the way an event is experienced by the individual in the conscious moral act, in a relation to another human being.

Teaching and learning is part of the events in life, where both teacher and pupils or students are forming the events together. Chronotopical thinking will thus, in an educational situation, open up for learning more than skills and knowledge of the subject matter, and for a different view on how learning develops. The Government defines good knowledge this way: a) social, cultural and ethical knowledge and skills b) ability to cooperate c) ability to think critically d) ability to take part in democratic processes e) ability to take responsibility for own life. Based on this study, I offer another point to this list: the ability to form relations. Chronotopical thinking could lead the way to this aim.

Some further perspectives

Educational situations are complex, and in research it is difficult, not to say impossible, to maintain this complexity. This should not prevent anyone for trying. In this study it has been my aim not to reduce the complexity of the situations, but rather to reveal the paradoxes, conflicts, the challenges and controversies, the pain and pleasure of educational situations. This study presents one way of broadening the field of educational research. As Jörg et al. (2007) state, there is a call for "*new tools of thought to go beyond our trained thinking in terms of linear causality*" (p. 6, my emphasis). The concept of *chronotopical thinking* in my study is an attempt to answer this call.

Perspectives for educational research

I would argue that the concept of chronotopical thinking offers a fruitful way to expand the scope of educational research and the way we view teaching and learning. If we accept this as a viable approach, it would be imperative to recognize that chronotopical thinking does not remain as just another theoretical or abstract concept, but that it is a form of embodied, relational knowledge as suggested in this study. The question raised by Sidorkin (2002), that relational thinking in teaching and learning is a skill, could be an interesting point of departure for further research. Moreover, it is important to have in mind that the chronotope is connected to a person who *acts in a responsible way in relation to the other.* It is my claim that it is only in this way chronotopical thinking will have its full impact. I suggest that further research also should be focused on how chronotopical thinking could alter our perception of rationality, as an alterative to logical analytic rationality.

By *using* chronotopical thinking in educational research, how theoretical or abstract it might be, would be to perform research from within a responsible consciousness, who relates research to other humans beings instead of merely linking it to other theories. This way of doing research would be different from what Bulterman-Bos (2008) suggests in her article "Will a Clinical Approach Make Education Research More Relevant for Practice?" in a recent special edition of *Educational Researcher.* The clinical approach advocated by Bulterman-Bos is supposed to create a closer relation between research and practice. This suggestion raises a lot of questions, among others the question of direct, instrumental application of research results on practice. Without going further into this discussion, I can say that I support her alteration of the concept of "relevance" to "responsibility"(Bulterman-Bos, 2008b).

Perspectives for education

Since I have been a practising teacher, which by this study has moved into research, the way I have performed my study could be an inspiration for others. Not necessarily in order to leave teaching and become a researcher, even though I believe this would enrich the research community. It would also be an answer to the challenge that Bulterman-Bos (2008, 2008b) promotes, as one possible way of linking research and practice. This alternative answer is without the direct application of research on practice, but rather with the aim of opening up practice to something that is not obvious in everyday school life. On a smaller scale I can recommend this method for teachers as well, because it is eye-opening, rewarding and empowering.

Chronotopical thinking could also have implications for teaching and teacher education. The implications for the way teachers and teacher educators view learning could be massive. Chronotopical thinking presents an alternative to the linear block-by-block-view on learning. The possibilities that open up with this alternative view, for the pupils and students to find resources they did not know they possessed, could help all of them, but in particular those on the verge of marginalization.

Chronotopical thinking should not be understood as teaching strategies, teaching models or styles, or a didactical tool. As mentioned above, it is rather a way of being, as a responsible acting human being, even though I believe it could be trained. It certainly would grow by help of experience. This is an embodied and relational awareness and sensitivity that helps the teacher see beyond the roles of teacher and student, without letting go of professionalism. Chronotopical thinking will not make teaching easier, and it will not save time. It is possible that this approach to teaching will not create more discipline or control. What it *could* contribute to is to make teaching (and learning) more interesting and rewarding, because it could open up the task of teaching to other aspects, and make classrooms more alive. It is certainly a way to meet the pupil or student where s/he is in a different way than by testing and mapping.

Chronotopical thinking could thus have implications for policy making. This study underscores the point that educational thinking is not just a matter of systems, skills, and testing on all levels. In the study I ask what it means to be a human being in educational

settings and political contexts. The answer provided is that it means to be relational, with the consequences this answer has to educational praxis. I challenge policy makers to realize the crucial importance of this and expand their view on educational aims and policy plans.

References

Bakhtin, M. M. (1990a). Art And Answerability. In M. Holquist & V. Liapunov (Eds.), *Art and answerability. Early Philosophical Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1990b). Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity. In M. Holquist & V. Liapunov (Eds.), *Art and Answerability*. Austion: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1999). Toward a Philosophy of the Act (V. Liapunov, Trans.). In V. Liapunov (Ed.), *M.M. Bakhtin. Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (Third ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (2006a). Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel. In M. Holquist (Ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination* (pp. 84-258). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (2006). The Problem of Speech Genres. In C. Emerson & M. Holquist (Eds.), *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays* (pp. 60-102). Austin: University of Texas Press

Bakhtin, M. M. (2006b). Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics. In C. Emerson (Ed.), *M.M. Bakhtin Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Brown, R., & Renshaw, P. (2006). Positioning Students as Actors and Authors: A Chronotopic Analysis of Collaborative Learning Activities. *Mind, Culture, and Activity, 13*(3), 247-259.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press.

Bulterman-Bos, J. A. (2008). Relevance in Educational Research. Will a Clinical Approach Make Education Research More Relevant for Practice? *Educational Researcher, 37*(7), 412-420.

Bulterman-Bos, J. A. (2008b). Clinical Study: A Pursuit of Responsibility as the Basis of Education Research. *Educational Researcher, 37*(7), 439-445.

Burdell, P., & Swadener, B. B. (1999). Critical Personal Narrative and Autoethnography in Education: Reflections on a Genre *Educational Researcher, 28*(6), 21-26.

Clandinin, D. J., Connelly, F. M., & Chan, E. (2002). Three Narrative Teaching Practices - One Narrative Teaching Exercise. In N. Lyons & V. K. LaBoskey (Eds.), *Narrative Inquiry in Practice Advancing the Knowledge of Teaching* (pp. 133-145). New York and London: Teachers College Press.

Clark, K., & Holquist, M. (1984). *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press.

Clifford, J. (1986). Introduction: Partial Truths. In J. Clifford & G. E. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (pp. 1-26). Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Crossley, S. (2007). A chronotopic approach to genre analysis: An exploratory study. *English for Specific Purposes, 26*, 4-24.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity. In E. G. Guba & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, London, New DehliSAGE Publications Inc.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). *Rationalitet og magt* Århus: Akademisk Forlag A/S.

Goodson, I. F. (2000). *Livshistorier - kilde til forståelse av utdanning*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

Gust, S.-W. (2007). "Look Out for the Footballplayers and the Frat Boys": Autoethnographic Reflections of a Gay Teacher in a Gay Curricular Experience *Educational Studies, 41*(1), 43-60.

Guyer, P., & Wood, A. (2000). Introduction to the Critique of Pure Reason *Critique of Pure Reason* (pp. 1-80). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing Qualitative Research in Educational Settings*. Albany: State University of New York Press

Holman-Jones, S. (2005). Autoethnography: Making the Personal Political. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. Third Edition* (pp. 763-792). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

Holquist, M. (2004). *Dialogism*. New York: Routledge.

Holquist, M. (Ed.). (2006). *The Dialogic Imagination Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Hustvedt, S. (2006). *A Plea For Eros*. London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd.

Jørgensen, M. W., & Phillips, L. (2006). *Diskursanalyse som teori og metode (Discourse analysis as theory and method)*. Roskilde: Roskilde Universitetsforlag.

Kant, I. (2000). *Critique of Pure Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Denzin, N. K. (Eds.). (2003). *Turning Points in Qualitative Research. Tying Knots in a Handerchief*. Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, Oxford: AltaMira Press.

Long, L. (2008). Narrative Autoethnography and the Promotion of Spiritual Well-Being in Teacher Research and Practice *Pastoral Care in Education, 26*(3), 187-196.

McGregor, C. (2007). Self-fashioning through memoir: becoming an adult educator. *Teacher Development, 11*(1), 77-97.

Morson, G. S., & Emerson, C. (1990). *Mikhail Bakhtin Creation of a Prosaics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Nelson, M. E., Hull, G. A., & Roche-Smith, J. (2008). Challenges of Multimedia Self-Presentation: Taking, and Mistaking, the Show on the Road. *Written Communication, 25*, 415-440.

Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2007). *Summary of Report No.16 (2006-2007) to the Storting: Early Intervention for Lifelong Learning*.
Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Reed-Danahay, D. E. (1997). Introduction. In D. E. Reed-Danahay (Ed.), *Auto/Ethnography Rewriting the Self and the Social* (pp. 1-17). Oxford New York: Berg.

Rorty, R. (1991). *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers* (Vol. 1). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sidorkin, A. M. (1999). *Beyond Discourse. Education, the Self, and Dialogue* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Sidorkin, A. M. (2002). *Learning Relations. Impure Education, Deschooled Schools, & Dialogue with Evil*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
Silverthorne, R. T. M. (Ed.). (1998). *Hobbes On the Citizen*. New York: Cambridge University Press

Souto-Manning, M. (2006). A Critical Look at Bilingualism Discourse in Public Schools: Autoethnographic Reflections of A Vulnerable Observer *Bilingual Research Journal, 30*(2), 559-577.

Spry, T. (2001). Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological Praxis. *7*, 706-732

T. Jörg, e. a. (2007). Towards a new, complexity science of learning and education. *Educational Research Review*.